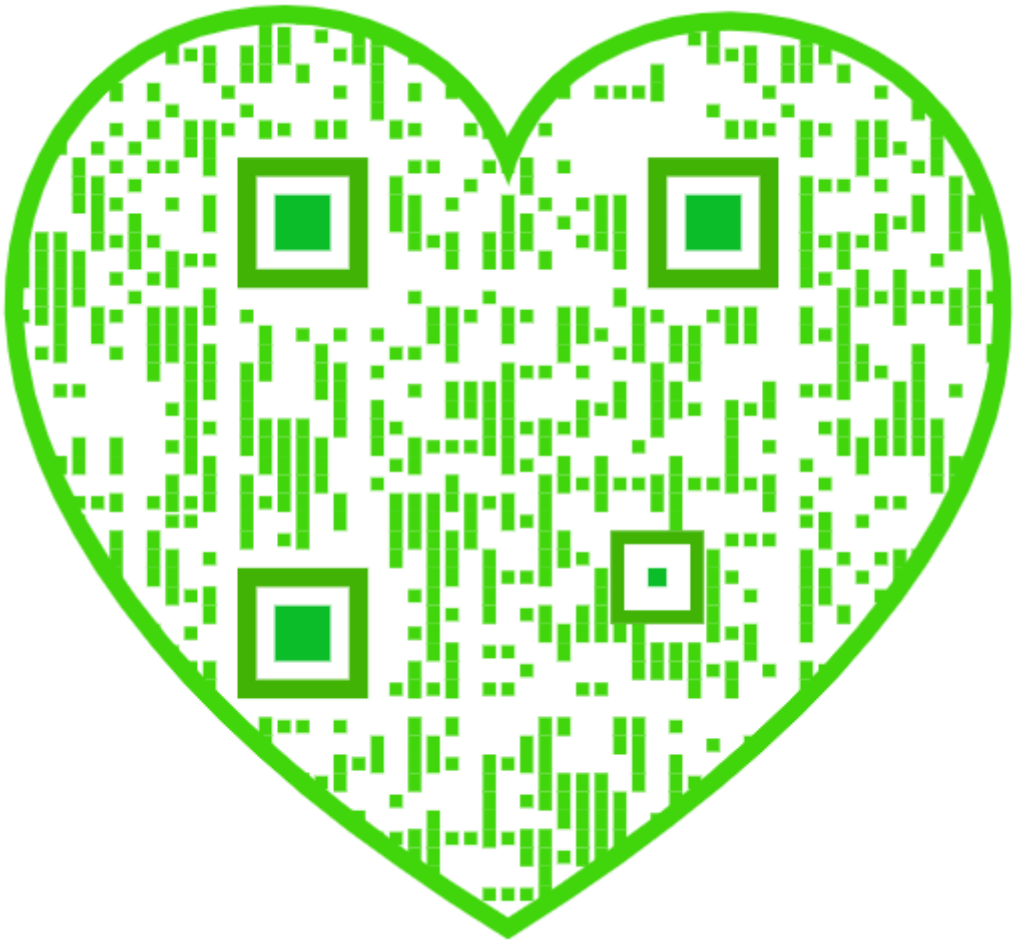

BLUE JACKETS OF '76

A HISTORY OF THE NAVAL BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

TOGETHER WITH A NARRATIVE OF

THE WAR WITH TRIPOLI

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY W. C. JACKSON AND H. W. McVICKAR

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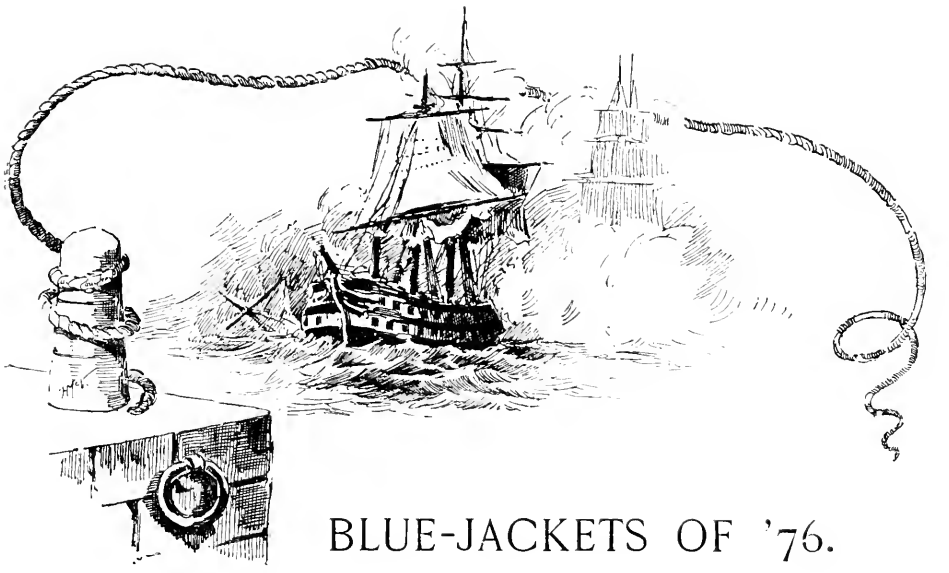


BLUE-JACKETS OF '76.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY EXPLOITS UPON THE WATER. — GALLOP'S BATTLE WITH THE INDIANS. — BUCCANEERS AND PIRATES. — MORGAN AND BLACKBEARD. — CAPT. KIDD TURNS PIRATE. — DOWNFALL OF THE BUCCANEERS' POWER.

IN MAY, 1636, a stanch little sloop of some twenty tons was standing along Long Island Sound on a trading expedition. At her helm stood John Gallop, a sturdy colonist, and a skilful seaman, who earned his bread by trading with the Indians that at that time thronged the shores of the Sound, and eagerly seized any opportunity to traffic with the white men from the colonies of Plymouth or New Amsterdam. The colonists sent out beads, knives, bright clothes, and sometimes, unfortunately, rum and other strong drinks. The Indians in exchange offered skins and peltries of all kinds; and, as their simple natures had not been schooled to nice calculations of values, the traffic was one of great profit to the more shrewd whites. But the trade was not without its perils. Though the Indians were simple, and little likely to drive hard bargains, yet they were savages, and little accustomed to nice distinctions between their own property

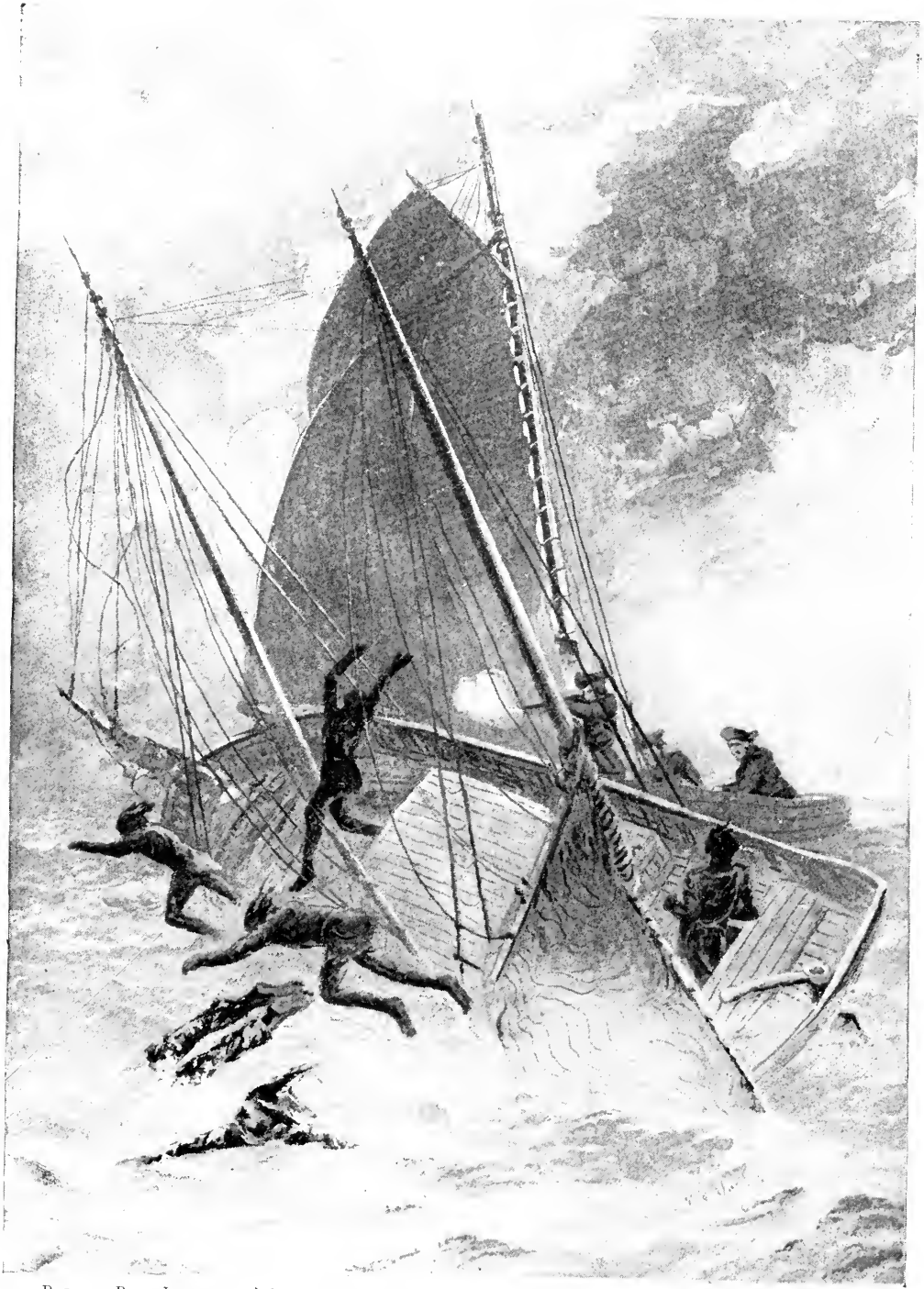
and that of others. Their desires once aroused for some gaudy bit of cloth or shining glass, they were ready enough to steal it, often making their booty secure by the murder of the luckless trader. It so happened, that, just before John Gallop set out with his sloop on the spring trading cruise, the people of the colony were excitedly discussing the probable fate of one Oldham, who some weeks before had set out on a like errand, in a pinnace, with a crew of two white boys and two Indians, and had never returned. So when, on this May morning, Gallop, being forced to hug the shore by stormy weather, saw a small vessel lying at anchor in a cove, he immediately ran down nearer, to investigate. The crew of the sloop numbered two men and two boys, beside the skipper, Gallop. Some heavy duck-guns on board were no mean ordnance; and the New Englander determined to probe the mystery of Oldham's disappearance, though it might require some fighting. As the sloop bore down upon the anchored pinnace, Gallop found no lack of signs to arouse his suspicion. The rigging of the strange craft was loose, and seemed to have been cut. No lookout was visible, and she seemed to have been deserted; but a nearer view showed, lying on the deck of the pinnace, fourteen stalwart Indians, one of whom, catching sight of the approaching sloop, cut the anchor cable, and called to his companions to awake.

This action on the part of the Indians left Gallop no doubt as to their character. Evidently they had captured the pinnace, and had either murdered Oldham, or even then had him a prisoner in their midst. The daring sailor wasted no time in debate as to the proper course to pursue, but clapping all sail on his craft, soon brought her alongside the pinnace. As the sloop came up, the Indians opened the fight with fire-arms and spears; but Gallop's crew responded with their duck-guns with such vigor that the Indians deserted the decks, and fled below for shelter. Gallop was then in a quandary. The odds against him were too great for him to dare to board, and the pinnace was rapidly drifting ashore. After some deliberation he put up his helm, and beat to windward of the pinnace; then, coming about, came scudding down upon her before the

wind. The two vessels met with a tremendous shock. The bow of the sloop struck the pinnace fairly amidships, forcing her over on her beam-ends, until the water poured into the open hatchway. The affrighted Indians, unused to warfare on the water, rushed upon deck. Six leaped into the sea, and were drowned; the rest retreated again into the cabin. Gallop then prepared to repeat his ramming manœuvre. This time, to make the blow more effective, he lashed his anchor to the bow, so that the sharp flukes protruded; thus extemporizing an iron-clad ram more than two hundred years before naval men thought of using one. Thus provided, the second blow of the sloop was more terrible than the first. The sharp fluke of the anchor crashed through the side of the pinnace, and the two vessels hung tightly together. Gallop then began to double-load his duck-guns, and fire through the sides of the pinnace; but, finding that the enemy was not to be dislodged in this way, he broke his vessel loose, and again made for the windward, preparatory to a third blow. As the sloop drew off, four or five more Indians rushed from the cabin of the pinnace, and leaped overboard, but shared the fate of their predecessors, being far from land. Gallop then came about, and for the third time bore down upon his adversary. As he drew near, an Indian appeared on the deck of the pinnace, and with humble gestures offered to submit. Gallop ran alongside, and taking the man on board, bound him hand and foot, and placed him in the hold. A second redskin then begged for quarter; but Gallop, fearing to allow the two wily savages to be together, cast the second into the sea, where he was drowned. Gallop then boarded the pinnace. Two Indians were left, who retreated into a small compartment of the hold, and were left unmolested. In the cabin was found the mangled body of Mr. Oldham. A tomahawk had been sunk deep into his skull, and his body was covered with wounds. The floor of the cabin was littered with portions of the cargo, which the murderous savages had plundered. Taking all that remained of value upon his own craft, Gallop cut loose the pinnace; and she drifted away, to go to pieces on a reef in Narragansett Bay.

This combat is the earliest action upon American waters of which we have any trustworthy records. The only naval event antedating this was the expedition from Virginia, under Capt. Samuel Argal, against the little French settlement of San Sauveur. Indeed, had it not been for the pirates and the neighboring French settlements, there would be little in the early history of the American Colonies to attract the lover of naval history. But about 1645 the buccaneers began to commit depredations on the high seas, and it became necessary for the Colonies to take steps for the protection of their commerce. In this year an eighteen-gun ship from Cambridge, Mass., fell in with a Barbary pirate of twenty guns, and was hard put to it to escape. And, as the seventeenth century drew near its close, these pests of the sea so increased, that evil was sure to befall the peaceful merchantman that put to sea without due preparation for a fight or two with the sea robbers.

It was in the low-lying islands of the Gulf of Mexico, that these predatory gentry — buccaneers, marooners, or pirates — made their headquarters, and lay in wait for the richly freighted merchantmen in the West India trade. Men of all nationalities sailed under the "Jolly Roger," — as the dread black flag with skull and cross-bones was called, — but chiefly were they French and Spaniards. The continual wars that in that turbulent time racked Europe gave to the marauders of the sea a specious excuse for their occupation. Thus, many a Spanish schooner, manned by a swarthy crew bent on plunder, commenced her career on the Spanish Main, with the intention of taking only ships belonging to France and England; but let a richly laden Spanish galleon appear, after a long season of ill-fortune, and all scruples were thrown aside, the "Jolly Roger" sent merrily to the fore, and another pirate was added to the list of those that made the highways of the sea as dangerous to travel as the footpad infested common of Hounslow Heath. English ships went out to hunt down the treacherous Spaniards, and stayed to rob and pillage indiscriminately; and not a few of the names now honored as those of eminent English discoverers, were once dreaded as being borne by merciless pirates.



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GALLOPS' BATTLE WITH INDIANS.

But the most powerful of the buccaneers on the Spanish Main were French, and between them and the Spaniards an unceasing warfare was waged. There were desperate men on either side, and mighty stories are told of their deeds of valor. There were Pierre François, who, with six and twenty desperadoes, dashed into the heart of a Spanish fleet, and captured the admiral's flag-ship; Bartholomew Portuguese, who, with thirty men, made repeated attacks upon a great Indiaman with a crew of seventy, and though beaten back time and again, persisted until the crew surrendered to the twenty buccaneers left alive; François l'Olonoise, who sacked the cities of Maracaibo and Gibraltar, and who, on hearing that a man-o'-war had been sent to drive him away, went boldly to meet her, captured her, and slaughtered all of the crew save one, whom he sent to bear the bloody tidings to the governor of Havana.

Such were the buccaneers, — desperate, merciless, and insatiate in their lust for plunder. So numerous did they finally become, that no merchant dared to send a ship to the West Indies; and the pirates, finding that they had fairly exterminated their game, were fain to turn landwards for further booty. It was an Englishman that showed the sea rovers this new plan of pillage; one Louis Scott, who descended upon the town of Campeche, and, after stripping the place to the bare walls, demanded that a heavy tribute be paid him, in default of which he would burn the town. Loaded with booty, he sailed back to the buccaneers' haunts in the Tortugas. This expedition was the example that the buccaneers followed for the next few years. City after city fell a prey to the demoniac attacks of the lawless rovers. Houses and churches were sacked, towns given to the flames, rich and poor plundered alike; murder was rampant; and men and women were subjected to the most horrid tortures, to extort information as to buried treasures.

Two great names stand out pre-eminent amid the host of outlaws that took part in this reign of rapine, — l'Olonoise and Sir Henry Morgan. The desperate exploits of these two worthies would, if recounted, fill volumes; and probably no more extraordinary narrative of cruelty, courage, suffering, and barbaric luxury could be fabricated. Morgan was a Welsh-

man, an emigrant, who, having worked out as a slave the cost of his passage across the ocean, took immediate advantage of his freedom to take up the trade of piracy. For him was no pillaging of paltry merchant-ships. He demanded grander operations, and his bands of desperadoes assumed the proportions of armies. Many were the towns that suffered from the bloody visitations of Morgan and his men. Puerto del Principe yielded up to them three hundred thousand pieces of eight, five hundred head of cattle, and many prisoners. Porto Bello was bravely defended against the barbarians; and the stubbornness of the defence so enraged Morgan, that he swore that no quarter should be given the defenders. And so when some hours later the chief fortress surrendered, the merciless buccaneer locked its garrison in the guard-room, set a torch to the magazine, and sent castle and garrison flying into the air. Maracaibo and Gibraltar next fell into the clutches of the pirate. At the latter town, finding himself caught in a river with three men-of-war anchored at its mouth, he hastily built a fire-ship, put some desperate men at the helm, and sent her, a sheet of flame, into the midst of the squadron. The admiral's ship was destroyed; and the pirates sailed away, exulting over their adversaries' discomfiture. Rejoicing over their victories, the followers of Morgan then planned a venture that should eclipse all that had gone before. This was no less than a descent upon Panama, the most powerful of the West Indian cities. For this undertaking, Morgan gathered around him an army of over two thousand desperadoes of all nationalities. A little village on the island of Hispaniola was chosen as the recruiting station; and thither flocked pirates, thieves, and adventurers from all parts of the world. It was a motley crew thus gathered together, — Spaniards, swarthy skinned and black haired; wiry Frenchmen, quick to anger, and ever ready with cutlass or pistol; Malays and Lascars, half clad in gaudy colors, treacherous and sullen, with a hand ever on their glittering creeses; Englishmen, handy alike with fist, bludgeon, or cutlass, and mightily given to fearful oaths; negroes, Moors, and a few West Indians mixed with the lawless throng.

Having gathered his band, procured provisions (chiefly by plundering),

and built a fleet of boats, Morgan put his forces in motion. The first obstacle in his path was the Castle of Chagres, which guarded the mouth of the Chagres River, up which the buccaneers must pass to reach the city of Panama. To capture this fortress, Morgan sent his vice-admiral Bradley, with four hundred men. The Spaniards were evidently warned of their approach; for hardly had the first ship flying the piratical ensign appeared at the mouth of the river, when the royal standard of Spain was hoisted above the castle, and the dull report of a shotted gun told the pirates that there was a stubborn resistance in store for them.

Landing some miles below the castle, and cutting their way with hatchet and sabre through the densely interwoven vegetation of a tropical jungle, the pirates at last reached a spot from which a clear view of the castle could be obtained. As they emerged from the forest to the open, the sight greatly disheartened them. They saw a powerful fort, with bastions, moat, drawbridge, and precipitous natural defences. Many of the pirates advised a retreat; but Bradley, dreading the anger of Morgan, ordered an assault. Time after time did the desperate buccaneers, with horrid yells, rush upon the fort, only to be beaten back by the well-directed volleys of the garrison. They charged up to the very walls, threw over fireballs, and hacked the timbers with axes, but to no avail. From behind their impregnable ramparts, the Spaniards fired murderous volleys, crying out, —

"Come on, you English devils, you heretics, the enemies of God and of the king! Let your comrades who are behind come also. We will serve them as we have served you. You shall not get to Panama this time."

As night fell, the pirates withdrew into the thickets to escape the fire of their enemies, and to discuss their discomfiture. As one group of buccaneers lay in the jungle, a chance arrow, shot by an Indian in the fort, struck one of them in the arm. Springing to his feet with a cry of rage and pain, the wounded man cried out as he tore the arrow from the bleeding wound, —

"Look here, my comrades. I will make this accursed arrow the means of the destruction of all the Spaniards."

So saying, he wrapped a quantity of cotton about the head of the arrow, charged his gun with powder, and, thrusting the arrow into the muzzle, fired. His comrades eagerly watched the flight of the missile, which was easily traced by the flaming cotton. Hurtling through the air, the fiery missile fell upon a thatched roof within the castle, and the dry straw and leaves were instantly in a blaze. With cries of savage joy, the buccaneers ran about picking up the arrows that lay scattered over the battle-field. Soon the air was full of the firebrands, and the woodwork within the castle enclosure was a mass of flame. One arrow fell within the magazine; and a burst of smoke and flame, and the dull roar of an explosion, followed. The Spaniards worked valiantly to extinguish the flames, and to beat back their assailants; but the fire raged beyond their control, and the bright light made them easy targets for their foes. There could be but one issue to such a conflict. By morning the fort was in the hands of the buccaneers, and of the garrison of three hundred and fourteen only fourteen were unhurt. Over the ruins of the fort the English flag was hoisted, the shattered walls were repaired, and the place made a rendezvous for Morgan's forces.

On the scene of the battle Morgan drilled his forces, and prepared for the march and battles that were to come. After some days' preparation, the expedition set out. The road lay through tangled tropical forests, under a burning sun. Little food was taken, as the invaders expected to live on the country; but the inhabitants fled before the advancing column, destroying every thing eatable. Soon starvation stared the desperadoes in the face. They fed upon berries, roots, and leaves. As the days passed, and no food was to be found, they sliced up and devoured coarse leather bags. For a time, it seemed that they would never escape alive from the jungle; but at last, weak, weary, and emaciated, they came out upon a grassy plain before the city of Panama. Here, a few days later, a great battle was fought. The Spaniards outnumbered the invaders, and were better provided with munitions of war; yet the pirates, fighting with the bravery of desperate men, were victorious, and the city fell into their hands. Then followed days of murder,

plunder, and debauchery. Morgan saw his followers, maddened by liquor, scoff at the idea of discipline and obedience. Fearing that while his men were helplessly drunk the Spaniards would rally and cut them to pieces, he set fire to the city, that the stores of rum might be destroyed. After sacking the town, the vandals packed their plunder on the backs of mules, and retraced their steps to the seaboard. Their booty amounted to over two millions of dollars. Over the division of this enormous sum great dissensions arose, and Morgan saw the mutinous spirit spreading rapidly among his men. With a few accomplices, therefore, he loaded a ship with the plunder, and secretly set sail; leaving over half of his band, without food or shelter, in a hostile country. Many of the abandoned buccaneers starved, some were shot or hanged by the enraged Spaniards; but the leader of the rapacious gang reached Jamaica with a huge fortune, and was appointed governor of the island, and made a baronet by the reigning king of England, Charles the Second.

Such were some of the exploits of some of the more notorious of the buccaneers. It may be readily imagined, that, with hordes of desperadoes such as these infesting the waters of the West Indies, there was little opportunity for the American Colonies to build up any maritime interests in that direction. And as the merchantmen became scarce on the Spanish Main, such of the buccaneers as did not turn landward in search of booty put out to sea, and ravaged the ocean pathways between the Colonies and England. It was against these pirates, that the earliest naval operations of the Colonies were directed. Several cruisers were fitted out to rid the seas of these pests, but we hear little of their success. But the name of one officer sent against the pirates has become notorious as that of the worst villain of them all.

It was in January, 1665, that William III., King of England, issued "to our true and well-beloved Capt. William Kidd, commander of the ship 'Adventure,'" a commission to proceed against "divers wicked persons who commit many and great piracies, robberies, and depredations on the seas." Kidd was a merchant of New York, and had commanded a privateer during the last war with France. He was a man of great

courage, and, being provided with a stanch ship and brave crew, set out with high hopes of winning great reputation and much prize money. But fortune was against him. For months the "Adventure" ploughed the blue waves of the ocean, yet not a sail appeared on the horizon. Once, indeed, three ships were seen in the distance. The men of the "Adventure" were overjoyed at the prospect of a rich prize, The ship was prepared for action. The men, stripped to the waist, stood at their quarters, talking of the coming battle. Kidd stood in the rigging with a spy-glass, eagerly examining the distant vessels. But only disappointment was in store; for, as the ships drew nearer, Kidd shut his spy-glass with an oath, saying, —

"They are only three English men-o'-war."

Continued disappointment bred discontent and mutiny among the crew. They had been enlisted with lavish promises of prize money, but saw before them nothing but a profitless cruise. The spirit of discontent spread rapidly. Three or four ships that were sighted proved to be neither pirates nor French, and were therefore beyond the powers of capture granted Kidd by the king. Kidd fought against the growing piratical sentiment for a long time; but temptation at last overcame him, and he yielded. Near the Straits of Babelmandeb, at the entrance to the Red Sea, he landed a party, plundered the adjoining country for provisions, and, turning his ship's prow toward the straits, mustered his crew on deck, and thus addressed them: —

"We have been unsuccessful hitherto, my boys," he said, "but take courage. Fortune is now about to smile upon us. The fleet of the 'Great Mogul,' freighted with the richest treasures, is soon to come out of the Red Sea. From the capture of those heavily laden ships, we will all grow rich."

The crew, ready enough to become pirates, cheered lustily: and, turning his back upon all hopes of an honorable career, Kidd set out in search of the treasure fleet. After cruising for four days, the "Adventure" fell in with the squadron, which proved to be under convoy of an English and a Dutch man-of-war. The squadron was a large one, and

the ships greatly scattered. By skilful seamanship, Kidd dashed down upon an outlying vessel, hoping to capture and plunder it before the convoying men-of-war could come to its rescue. But his first shot attracted the attention of the watchful guardians; and, though several miles away, they packed on all sail, and bore down to the rescue with such spirit that the disappointed pirate was forced to sheer off. Kidd was now desperate. He had failed as a reputable privateer, and his first attempt at piracy had failed. Thenceforward, he cast aside all scruples, and captured large ships and small, tortured their crews, and for a time seemed resolved to lead a piratical life. But there are evidences that at times this strange man relented, and strove to return to the path of duty and right. On one occasion, a Dutch ship crossed the path of the "Adventure," and the crew clamorously demanded her capture. Kidd firmly refused. A tumult arose. The captain drew his sabre and pistols, and gathering about him those still faithful, addressed the mutineers, saying, —

"You may take the boats and go. But those who thus leave this ship will never ascend its sides again."

The mutineers murmured loudly. One man, a gunner, named William Moore, stepped forward, saying, —

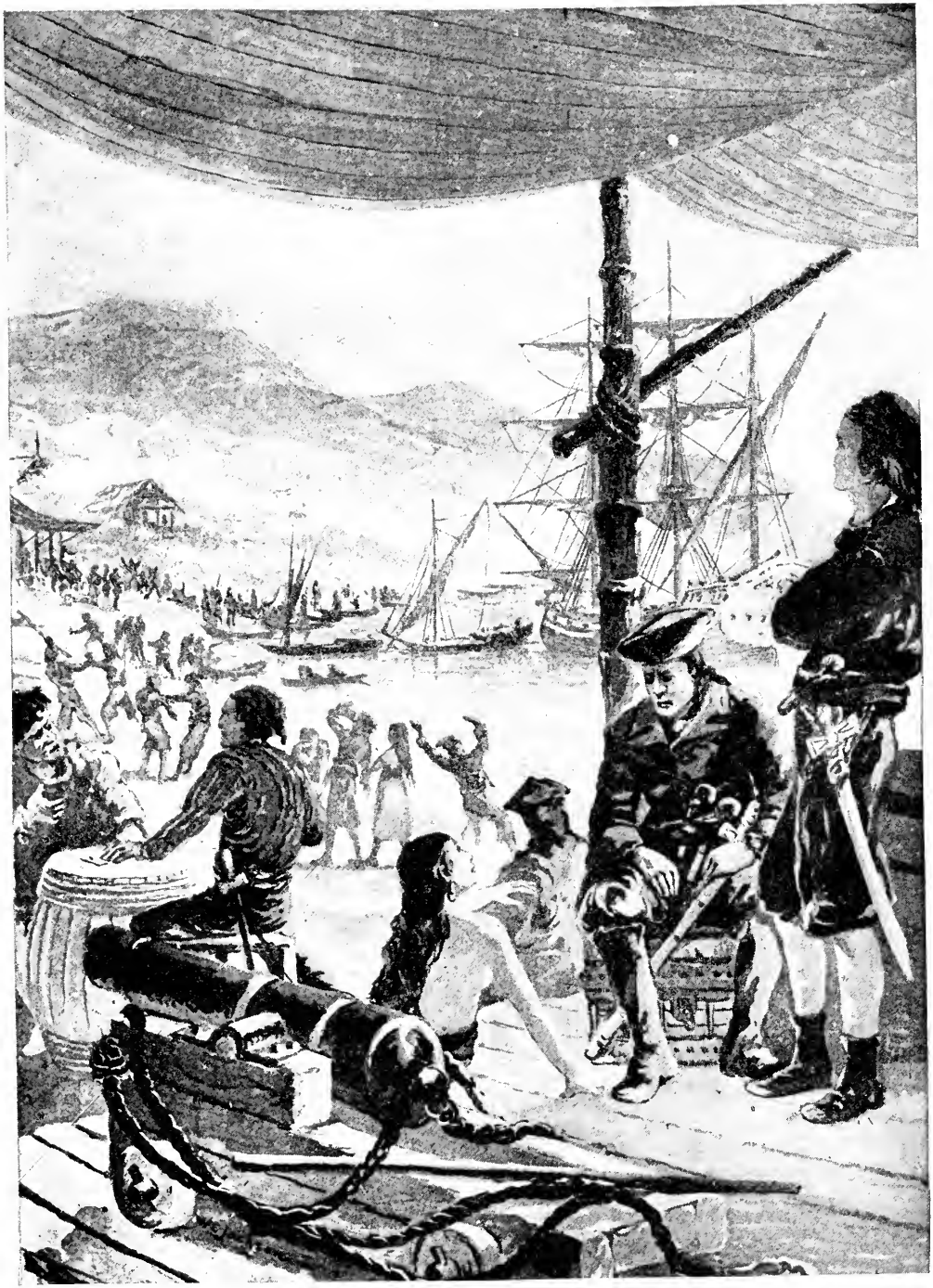
"You are ruining us all. You are keeping us in beggary and starvation. But for your whims, we might all be prosperous and rich."

At this outspoken mutiny, Kidd flew into a passion. Seizing a heavy bucket that stood near, he dealt Moore a terrible blow on the head. The unhappy man fell to the deck with a fractured skull, and the other mutineers sullenly yielded to the captain's will. Moore died the next day; and months after, when Kidd, after roving the seas, and robbing ships of every nationality, was brought to trial at London, it was for the murder of William Moore that he was condemned to die. For Kidd's career subsequent to the incident of the Dutch ship was that of a hardened pirate. He captured and robbed ships, and tortured their passengers. He went to Madagascar, the rendezvous of the pirates, and joined in their revelry and debauchery. On the island were five or six

hundred pirates, and ships flying the black flag were continually arriving or departing. The streets resounded with shouts of revelry, with curses, and with the cries of rage. Strong drinks were freely used. Drunkenness was everywhere. It was no uncommon thing for a hogshead of wine to be opened, and left standing in the streets, that any might drink who chose. The pirates, flush with their ill-gotten gains, spent money on gambling and kindred vices lavishly. The women who accompanied them to this lawless place were decked out with barbaric splendor in silks and jewels. On the arrival of a ship, the debauchery was unbounded. Such noted pirates as Blackbeard, Steed Bonnet, and Avary made the place their rendezvous, and brought thither their rich prizes and wretched prisoners. Blackbeard was one of the most desperate pirates of the age. He, with part of his crew, once terrorized the officials of Charleston, S.C., exacting tribute of medicines and provisions. Finally he was killed in action, and sixteen of his desperate gang expiated their crimes on the gallows.

To Madagascar, too, often came the two female pirates, Mary Read and Anne Bonny. These women, masquerading in men's clothing, were as desperate and bloody as the men by whose side they fought. By a strange coincidence, these two women enlisted on the same ship. Each knowing her own sex, and being ignorant of that of the other, they fell in love; and the final discovery of their mutual deception increased their intimacy. After serving with the pirates, working at the guns, swinging a cutlass in the boarding parties, and fighting a duel in which she killed her opponent, Mary Read determined to escape. There is every evidence that she wearied of the evil life she was leading, and was determined to quit it; but, before she could carry her intentions into effect, the ship on which she served was captured, and taken to England, where the pirates expiated their crimes on the gallows, Mary Read dying in prison before the day set for her execution.

After some months spent in licentious revelry at Madagascar, Kidd set out on a further cruise. During this voyage he learned that he had been proscribed as a pirate, and a price set on his head. Strange as



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RENDEZ-VOUS AT MADAGASCAR.

it may appear, this news was a surprise to him. He seems to have deceived himself into thinking that his acts of piracy were simply the legitimate work of a privateersman. For a time he knew not what to do; but as by this time the coarse pleasures of an outlaw's life were distasteful to him, he determined to proceed to New York, and endeavor to prove himself an honest man. This determination proved to be an unfortunate one for him; for hardly had he arrived, when he was taken into custody, and sent to England for trial. He made an able defence, but was found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged; a sentence which was executed some months later, in the presence of a vast multitude of people, who applauded in the death of Kidd the end of the reign of outlaws upon the ocean.

CHAPTER II.

EXPEDITIONS AGAINST NEIGHBORING COLONIES. — ROMANTIC CAREER OF SIR WILLIAM PHIPPS. — QUELLING A MUTINY. — EXPEDITIONS AGAINST QUEBEC.

WHILE it was chiefly in expeditions against the buccaneers, or in the defence of merchantmen against these predatory gentry, that the American colonists gained their experience in naval warfare, there were, nevertheless, some few naval expeditions fitted out by the colonists against the forces of a hostile government. Both to the north and south lay the territory of France and Spain, — England's traditional enemies; and so soon as the colonies began to give evidence of their value to the mother country, so soon were they dragged into the quarrels in which the haughty mistress of the seas was ever plunged. Of the southern colonies, South Carolina was continually embroiled with Spain, owing to the conviction of the Spanish that the boundaries of Florida — at that time a Spanish colony — included the greater part of the Carolinas. For the purpose of enforcing this idea, the Spaniards, in 1706, fitted out an expedition of four ships-of-war and a galley, which, under the command of a celebrated French admiral,

was despatched to take Charleston. The people of Charleston were in no whit daunted, and on the receipt of the news of the expedition began preparations for resistance. They had no naval vessels; but several large merchantmen, being in port, were hastily provided with batteries, and a large galley was converted into a flag-ship. Having no trained naval officers, the command of the improvised squadron was tendered to a certain Lieut.-Col. Rhett, who possessed the confidence of the colonists. Rhett accepted the command; and when the attacking party cast anchor some miles below the city, and landed their shore forces, he weighed anchor, and set out to attack them. But the Spaniards avoided the conflict, and fled out to sea, leaving their land forces to bear the brunt of battle. In this action, more than half of the invaders were killed or taken prisoners. Some days later, one of the Spanish vessels, having been separated from her consorts, was discovered by Rhett, who attacked her, and after a sharp fight captured her, bringing her with ninety prisoners to Charleston.

But it was chiefly in expeditions against the French colonies to the northward that the naval strength of the English colonies was exerted. Particularly were the colonies of Port Royal, in Acadia, and the French stronghold of Quebec coveted by the British, and they proved fertile sources of contention in the opening years of the eighteenth century. Although the movement for the capture of these colonies was incited by the ruling authorities of Great Britain, its execution was left largely to the colonists. One of the earliest of these expeditions was that which sailed from Nantasket, near Boston, in April, 1690, bound for the conquest of Port Royal.

This expedition was under the command of Sir William Phipps, a sturdy colonist, whose life was not devoid of romantic episodes. Though his ambitions were of the lowliest, — his dearest wish being "to command a king's ship, and own a fair brick house in the Green Lane of North Boston," — he managed to win for himself no small amount of fame and respect in the colonies. His first achievement was characteristic of that time, when Spanish galleons, freighted with golden ingots,

still sailed the seas, when pirates buried their booty, and when the treasures carried down in sunken ships were not brought up the next day by divers clad in patented submarine armor. From a weather-beaten old seaman, with whom he became acquainted while pursuing his trade of ship-carpentering, Phipps learned of a sunken wreck lying on the sandy bottom many fathoms beneath the blue surface of the Gulf of Mexico. The vessel had gone down fifty years before, and had carried with her great store of gold and silver, which she was carrying from the rich mines of Central and South America to the Court of Spain. Phipps, laboriously toiling with adze and saw in his ship-yard, listened to the story of the sailor, his blood coursing quicker in his veins, and his ambition for wealth and position aroused to its fullest extent. Here, then, thought he, was the opportunity of a lifetime. Could he but recover the treasures carried down with the sunken ship, he would have wealth and position in the colony. With these two allies at his command, the task of securing a command in the king's navy would be an easy one. But to seek out the sunken treasure required a ship and seamen. Clearly his own slender means could never meet the demands of so great an undertaking. Therefore, gathering together all his small savings, William Phipps set sail for England, in the hopes of interesting capitalists there in his scheme. By dint of indomitable persistence, the unknown American ship-carpenter managed to secure the influence of certain officials of high station in England, and finally managed to get the assistance of the British admiralty. A frigate, fully manned, was given him, and he set sail for the West Indies.

Once arrived in the waters of the Spanish Main, he began his search. Cruising about the spot indicated by his seafaring informant as the location of the sunken vessel, sounding and dredging occupied the time of the treasure-seekers for months. The crew, wearying of the fruitless search, began to murmur, and signs of mutiny were rife. Phipps, filled with thoughts of the treasure for which he sought, saw not at all the lowering looks, nor heard the half-uttered threats, of the crew as he passed them. But finally the mutiny so developed that he could no longer ignore its existence.

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QUELLING A MUTINY.

It was then the era of the buccaneers. Doubtless some of the crew had visited the outlaws' rendezvous at New Providence, and had told their comrades of the revelry and ease in which the sea robbers spent their days. And so it happened that one day, as Phipps stood on the quarter-deck vainly trying to choke down the nameless fear that had begun to oppress him, — the fear that his life's venture had proved a failure, — his crew came crowding aft, armed to the teeth, and loudly demanded that the captain should abandon his foolish search, and lead them on a fearless buccaneering cruise along the Spanish Main. The mutiny was one which might well have dismayed the boldest sea captain. The men were desperate, and well armed. Phipps was almost without support; for his officers, by their irresolute and timid demeanor, gave him little assurance of aid.

Standing on the quarter-deck, Phipps listened impatiently to the complaints of the mutineers; but, when their spokesman called upon him to lead them upon a piratical cruise, he lost all control of himself, and, throwing all prudence to the winds, sprung into the midst of the malcontents, and laid about him right manfully with his bare fists. The mutineers were all well armed, but seemed loath to use their weapons; and the captain, a tall, powerful man, soon awed them all into submission.

Though he showed indomitable energy in overcoming obstacles, Phipps was not destined to discover the object of his search at this time; and, after several months' cruising, he was forced, by the leaky condition of his vessel, to abandon the search. But, before leaving the waters of the Spanish Main, he obtained enough information to convince him that his plan was a practicable one, and no mere visionary scheme. On reaching England, he went at once to some wealthy noblemen, and, laying before them all the facts in his possession, so interested them in the project that they readily agreed to supply him with a fresh outfit. After a few weeks spent in organizing his expedition, the treasure-seeker was again on the ocean, making his way toward the Mexican Gulf. This time his search was successful, and a few days' work with divers and dredges about the sunken ship brought to light bullion and specie to

the amount of more than a million and a half dollars. As his ill success in the first expedition had embroiled him with his crew, so his good fortune this time aroused the cupidity of the sailors. Vague rumors of plotting against his life reached the ears of Phipps. Examining further into the matter, he learned that the crew was plotting to seize the vessel, divide the treasure, and set out upon a buccaneering cruise. Alarmed at this intelligence, Phipps strove to conciliate the seamen by offering them a share of the treasure. Each man should receive a portion, he promised, even if he himself had to pay it. The men agreed to this proposition; and so well did Phipps keep his word with them on returning to England, that, of the whole treasure, only about eighty thousand dollars remained to him as his share. This, however, was an ample fortune for those times; and with it Phipps returned to Boston, and began to devote himself to the task of securing a command in the royal navy.

His first opportunity to distinguish himself came in the expedition of 1690 against Port Royal. Throughout the wars between France and England, the French settlement of Port Royal had been a thorn in the flesh of Massachusetts. From Port Royal, the trim-built speedy French privateers put to sea, and seldom returned without bringing in their wake some captured coaster or luckless fisherman hailing from the colony of the Puritans. When the depredations of the privateers became unbearable, Massachusetts bestirred herself, and the doughty Phipps was sent with an expedition to reduce their unneighborly neighbor to subjection. Seven vessels and two hundred and eighty-eight men were put under the command of the lucky treasure-hunter. The expedition was devoid of exciting or novel features. Port Royal was reached without disaster, and the governor surrendered with a promptitude which should have won immunity for the people of the village. But the Massachusetts sailors had not undertaken the enterprise for glory alone, and they plundered the town before taking to their ships again.

This expedition, however, was but an unimportant incident in the naval annals of the colonies. It was followed quickly by an expedition of much graver importance.

When Phipps returned after capturing and plundering Port Royal, he found Boston vastly excited over the preparations for an expedition against Quebec. The colony was in no condition to undertake the work of conquest. Prolonged Indian wars had greatly depleted its treasury. Vainly it appealed to England for aid, but, receiving no encouragement, sturdily determined to undertake the expedition unaided. Sailors were pressed from the merchant-shipping. Trained bands, as the militia of that day was called, drilled in the streets, and on the common. Subscription papers were being circulated; and vessel owners were blandly given the choice between voluntarily loaning their vessels to the colony, or having them peremptorily seized. In this way a fleet of thirty-two vessels had been collected; the largest of which was a ship called the "Six Friends," built for the West India trade, and carrying forty-four guns. This armada was manned by seamen picked up by a press so vigorous, that Gloucester, the chief seafaring town of the colony, was robbed of two-thirds of its men. Hardly had Capt. Phipps, flushed with victory, returned from his Port Royal expedition, when he was given command of the armada destined for the capture of Quebec.

Early in August the flotilla set sail from Boston Harbor. The day was clear and warm, with a light breeze blowing. From his flag-ship Phipps gave the signal for weighing anchor, and soon the decks of the vessels thickly strewn about the harbor resounded to the tread of men about the capstan. Thirty-two vessels of the squadron floated lightly on the calm waters of the bay; and darting in and out among them were light craft carrying pleasure-seekers who had come down to witness the sailing of the fleet, friends and relatives of the sailors who were there to say farewell, and the civic dignitaries who came to wish the expedition success. One by one the vessels beat their way down the bay, and, rounding the dangerous reef at the mouth of the harbor, laid their course to the northward. It was a motley fleet of vessels. The "Six Brothers" led the way, followed by brigs, schooners, and many sloop-rigged fishing-smacks. With so ill-assorted a flotilla, it was impossible to keep any definite sailing order. The first night scattered the vessels far and wide, and thenceforward

the squadron was not united until it again came to anchor just above the mouth of the St. Lawrence. It seemed as though the very elements had combined against the voyagers. Though looking for summer weather, they encountered the bitter gales of November. Only after they had all safely entered the St. Lawrence, and were beyond injury from the storms, did the gales cease. They had suffered all the injury that tempestuous weather could do them, and they then had to chafe under the enforced restraints of a calm.

Phipps had rallied his scattered fleet, and had proceeded up the great river of the North to within three days' sail of Quebec, when the calm overtook him. On the way up the river he had captured two French luggers, and learned from his prisoners that Quebec was poorly fortified, that the cannon on the redoubts were dismounted, and that hardly two hundred men could be rallied to its defence. Highly elated at this, the Massachusetts admiral pressed forward. He anticipated that Quebec, like Port Royal, would surrender without striking a blow. Visions of high honors, and perhaps even a commission in the royal navy, floated across his brain. And while thus hurrying forward his fleet, drilling his men, and building his air-castles, his further progress was stopped by a dead calm which lasted three weeks.

How fatal to his hopes that calm was, Phipps, perhaps, never knew. The information he had wrung from his French prisoners was absolutely correct. Quebec at that time was helpless, and virtually at his mercy. But, while the Massachusetts armada lay idly floating on the unruffled bosom of the river, a man was hastening towards Quebec whose timely arrival meant the salvation of the French citadel.

This man was Frontenac, then governor of the French colony, and one of the most picturesque figures in American history. A soldier of France; a polished courtier at the royal court; a hero on the battle-field, and a favorite in the ball-room; a man poor in pocket, but rich in influential connections, — Frontenac had come to the New World to seek that fortune and position which he had in vain sought in the Old. When the vague rumors of the hostile expedition of the Massachusetts colony

reached his ears, Frontenac was far from Quebec, toiling in the western part of the colony. Wasting no time, he turned his steps toward the threatened city. His road lay through an almost trackless wilderness; his progress was impeded by the pelting rains of the autumnal storms. But through forest and through rain he rode fiercely; and at last as he burst from the forest, and saw towering before him the rocks of Cape Diamond, a cry of joy burst from his lips. On the broad, still bosom of the St. Lawrence Bay floated not a single hostile sail. The soldier had come in time.

With the governor in the city, all took courage, and the work of preparation for the coming struggle went forward with a rush. Far and wide throughout the parishes was spread the news of war, and daily volunteers came flocking in to the defence. The ramparts were strengthened, and cannon mounted. Volunteers and regulars drilled side by side, until the four thousand men in the city were converted into a well-disciplined body of troops. And all the time the sentinels on the Saut au Matelot were eagerly watching the river for the first sign of the English invaders.

It was before dawn, on the morning of Oct. 16, that the people of the little city, and the soldiery in the tents, were awakened by the alarm raised by the sentries. All rushed to the brink of the heights, and peered eagerly out into the darkness. Far down the river could be seen the twinkling lights of vessels. As the eager watchers strove to count them, other lights appeared upon the scene, moving to and fro, but with a steady advance upon Quebec. The gray dawn, breaking in the east, showed the advancing fleet. Frontenac and his lieutenants watched the ships of the enemy round the jutting headland of the Point of Orleans; and, by the time the sun had risen, thirty-four hostile craft were at anchor in the basin of Quebec.

The progress of the fleet up the river, from the point at which it had been so long delayed, had been slow, and greatly impeded by the determined hostility of the settlers along the banks. The sailors at their work were apt to be startled by the whiz of a bullet; and an

inquiry as to the cause would have probably discovered some crouching sharp-shooter, his long rifle in his hand, hidden in a clump of bushes along the shore. Bands of armed men followed the fleet up the stream, keeping pace with the vessels, and occasionally affording gentle reminders of their presence in the shape of volleys of rifle-balls that sung through the crowded decks of the transports, and gave the sailor lads a hearty disgust for this river fighting. Phipps tried repeatedly to land shore parties to clear the banks of skirmishers, and to move on the city by land. As often, however, as he made the effort, his troops were beaten back by the ambushed sharp-shooters, and his boats returned to the ships, bringing several dead and wounded.

While the soldiery on the highlands of Quebec were eagerly examining the hostile fleet, the invaders were looking with wonder and admiration at the scene of surpassing beauty spread out before them. Parkman, the historian and lover of the annals of the French in America, thus describes it: —

"When, after his protracted voyage, Phipps sailed into the basin of Quebec, one of the grandest scenes on the western continent opened upon his sight. The wide expanse of waters, the lofty promontory beyond, and the opposing Heights of Levi, the cataract of Montmorenci, the distant range of the Laurentian Mountains, the warlike rock with its diadem of walls and towers, the roofs of the Lower Town clustering on the strand beneath, the Chateau St. Louis perched at the brink of the cliff, and over it the white banner, spangled with *fleurs de lis*, flaunting defiance in the clear autumnal air."

Little time was spent, however, in admiration of the scene. When the click of the last chain-cable had ceased, and, with their anchors reposing at the bottom of the stream, the ships swung around with their bows to the current, a boat put off from the flag-ship bearing an officer intrusted with a note from Phipps to the commandant of the fort. The reception of this officer was highly theatrical. Half way to the shore he was taken into a French canoe, blindfolded, and taken ashore. The populace crowded about him as he landed, hooting and jeering him as

he was led through winding, narrow ways, up stairways, and over obstructions, until at last the bandage was torn from his eyes, and he found himself in the presence of Frontenac. The French commander was clad in a brilliant uniform, and surrounded by his staff, gay in warlike finery. With courtly courtesy he asked the envoy for his letter, which, proving to be a curt summons to surrender, he answered forthwith in a stinging speech. The envoy, abashed, asked for a written answer.

"No," thundered Frontenac, "I will answer your master only by the mouths of my cannon, that he may learn that a man like me is not to be summoned after this fashion. Let him do his best, and I will do mine."

The envoy returned to his craft, and made his report. The next day hostilities opened. Wheeling his ships into line before the fortifications, Phipps opened a heavy fire upon the city. From the frowning ramparts on the heights, Frontenac's cannon answered in kind. Fiercely the contest raged until nightfall, and vast was the consumption of gunpowder; but damage done on either side was but little. All night the belligerents rested on their arms; but, at daybreak, the roar of the cannonade recommenced.

The gunners of the opposing forces were now upon their mettle, and the gunnery was much better than the day before. A shot from the shore cut the flag-staff of the admiral's ship, and the cross of St. George fell into the river. Straightway a canoe put out from the shore, and with swift, strong paddle-strokes was guided in chase of the floating trophy. The fire of the fleet was quickly concentrated upon the adventurous canoeists. Cannon-balls and rifle-bullets cut the water about them; but their frail craft survived the leaden tempest, and they captured the trophy, and bore it off in triumph.

Phipps felt that the incident was an unfavorable omen, and would discourage his men. He cast about in his mind for a means of retaliation. Far over the roofs of the city rose a tapering spire, that of the cathedral in the Upper Town. On this spire, the devout Catholics of the French city had hung a picture of the Holy Family as an invocation of Divine

aid. Through his spy-glass, Phipps could see that some strange object hung from the steeple, and, suspecting its character, commanded the gunners to try to knock it down. For hours the Puritans wasted their ammunition in this vain target-practice, but to no avail. The picture still hung on high; and the devout Frenchmen ascribed its escape to a miracle, although its destruction would have been more miraculous still.

It did not take long to convince Phipps that in this contest his fleet was getting badly worsted, and he soon withdrew his vessels to a place of safety. The flag-ship had been fairly riddled with shot; and her rigging was so badly cut, that she could only get out of range of the enemy's guns by cutting her cables, and drifting away with the current. Her example was soon followed by the remaining vessels.

Sorely crestfallen, Phipps abandoned the fight, and prepared to return to Boston. His voyage thither was stormy; and three or four of his vessels never were heard of, having been dashed to pieces by the waves, or cast away upon the iron-bound coast of Nova Scotia or Maine. His expedition was the most costly in lives and in treasure ever undertaken by a single colony, and, despite its failure, forms the most notable incident in the naval annals of the colonies prior to the Revolution.

The French colonies continued to be a fruitful source of war and turmoil. Many were the joint military and naval expeditions fitted out against them by the British colonies. Quebec, Louisbourg, and Port Royal were all threatened; and the two latter were captured by colonial expeditions. From a naval point of view, these expeditions were but trifling. They are of some importance, however, in that they gave the colonists an opportunity to try their prowess on the ocean; and in this irregular service were bred some sailors who fought right valiantly for the rebellious colonies against the king, and others who did no less valiant service under the royal banner.

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ON THE IRON BOUND COAST

CHAPTER III.

OPENING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. — THE AFFAIR OF THE SCHOONER "ST. JOHN." — THE PRESS-GANG AND ITS WORK. — THE SLOOP "LIBERTY." — DESTRUCTION OF THE "GASPEE." — THE BOSTON TEA-PARTY.

IT is unnecessary to enter into an account of the causes that led up to the revolt of the American Colonies against the oppression of King George and his subservient Parliament. The story of the Stamp Act, the indignation of the Colonies, their futile attempts to convince Parliament of the injustice of the measure, the stern measures adopted by the British to put down the rising insubordination, the Boston Massacre, and the battles at Concord and Lexington are familiar to every American boy. But not every young American knows that almost the first act of open resistance to the authority of the king took place on the water, and was to some extent a naval action.

The revenue laws, enacted by the English Parliament as a means of extorting money from the Colonies, were very obnoxious to the people of America. Particularly did the colonists of Rhode Island protest against them, and seldom lost an opportunity to evade the payment of the taxes.

Between Providence and Newport, illicit trade flourished; and the waters of Narragansett Bay were dotted with the sail of small craft carrying cargoes on which no duties had ever been paid. In order to stop this nefarious traffic, armed vessels were stationed in the Bay, with orders to chase and search all craft suspected of smuggling. The presence of these vessels gave great offence to the colonists, and the inflexible

manner in which the naval officers discharged their duty caused more than one open defiance of the authority of King George.

The first serious trouble to grow out of the presence of the British cruisers in the bay was the affair of the schooner "St. John." This vessel was engaged in patrolling the waters of the bay in search of smugglers. While so engaged, her commander, Lieut. Hill, learned that a brig had discharged a suspicious cargo at night near Howland's Ferry. Running down to that point to investigate, the king's officers found the cargo to consist of smuggled goods; and, leaving a few men in charge, the cruiser hastily put out to sea in pursuit of the smuggler. The swift sailing schooner soon overtook the brig, and the latter was taken in to Newport as a prize. Although this affair occurred early in 1764, the sturdy colonists even then had little liking for the officers of the king. The sailors of the "St. John," careless of the evident dislike of the citizens of the town, swaggered about the streets, boasting of their capture, and making merry at the expense of the Yankees. Two or three fights between sailors and townspeople so stirred up the landsmen, that they determined to destroy the "St. John," and had actually fitted up an armed sloop for that purpose, when a second man-of-war appeared in the harbor and put a final stopper to the project. Though thus balked of their revenge, the townspeople showed their hatred for the king's navy by seizing a battery, and firing several shots at the two armed vessels, but without effect.

During the same year, the little town of Newport again gave evidence of the growth of the revolutionary spirit. This time the good old British custom of procuring sailors for the king's ships by a system of kidnapping, commonly known as impressment, was the cause of the outbreak. For some months the British man-of-war "Maidstone" lay in the harbor of Newport, idly tugging at her anchors. It was a period of peace, and her officers had nothing to occupy their attention. Therefore they devoted themselves to increasing the crew of the vessel by means of raids upon the taverns along the water-front of the city.

The seafaring men of Newport knew little peace while the "Maidstone" was in port. The king's service was the dread of every sailor; and, with

the press-gang nightly walking the streets, no sailor could feel secure. All knew the life led by the sailors on the king's ships. Those were the days when the cat-o'-nine-tails flourished, and the command of a beardless bit of a midshipmen was enough to send a poor fellow to the gratings, to have his back cut to pieces by the merciless lash. The Yankee sailors had little liking for this phase of sea-life, and they gave the men-of-war a wide berth.

Often it happened, however, that a party of jolly mariners sitting over their pipes and grog in the snug parlor of some sea-shore tavern, spinning yarns of the service they had seen on the gun-decks of his Majesty's ships, or of shipwreck and adventure in the merchant service, would start up and listen in affright, as the measured tramp of a body of men came up the street. Then came the heavy blow on the door.

"Open in the king's name," shouts a gruff voice outside; and the entrapped sailors, overturning the lights, spring for doors and windows, in vain attempts to escape the fate in store for them. The press-gang seldom returned to the ship empty handed, and the luckless tar who once fell into their clutches was wise to accept his capture good naturedly; for the bos'n's cat was the remedy commonly prescribed for sulkiness.

As long as the "Maidstone" lay in the harbor of Newport, raids such as this were of common occurrence. The people of the city grumbled a little; but it was the king's will, and none dared oppose it. The wives and sweethearts of the kidnapped sailors shed many a bitter tear over the disappearance of their husbands and lovers; but what were the tears of women to King George? And so the press-gang of the "Maidstone" might have continued to enjoy unopposed the stirring sport of hunting men like beasts, had the leaders not committed one atrocious act of inhumanity that roused the long-suffering people to resistance.

One breezy afternoon, a stanch brig, under full sail, came up the bay, and entered the harbor of Newport. Her sides were weather-beaten, and her dingy sails and patched cordage showed that she had just completed her long voyage. Her crew, a fine set of bronzed and hardy

sailors, were gathered on her forecastle, eagerly regarding the cluster of cottages that made up the little town of Newport. In those cottages were many loved ones, wives, mothers, and sweethearts, whom the brave fellows had not seen for long and weary months; for the brig was just returning from a voyage to the western coast of Africa.

It is hard to describe the feelings aroused by the arrival of a ship in port after a long voyage. From the outmost end of the longest wharf the relatives and friends of the sailors eagerly watch the approaching vessel, striving to find in her appearance some token of the safety of the loved ones on board. If a flag hangs at half-mast in the rigging, bitter is the suspense, and fearful the dread, of each anxious waiter, lest her husband or lover or son be the unfortunate one whose death is mourned. And on the deck of the ship the excitement is no less great. Even the hardened breast of the sailor swells with emotion when he first catches sight of his native town, after long months of absence. With eyes sharpened by constant searching for objects upon the broad bosom of the ocean, he scans the waiting crowd, striving to distinguish in the distance some well-beloved face. His spirits are light with the happy anticipation of a season in port with his loved ones, and he discharges his last duties before leaving the ship with a blithe heart.

So it was with the crew of the home-coming brig. Right merrily they sung out their choruses as they pulled at the ropes, and brought the vessel to anchor. The rumble of the hawser through the hawse-holes was sweet music to their ears; and so intent were they upon the crowd on the dock, that they did not notice two long-boats which had put off from the man-of-war, and were pulling for the brig. The captain of the merchantman, however, noticed the approach of the boats, and wondered what it meant. "Those fellows think I've smuggled goods aboard," said he. "However, they can spend their time searching if they want. I've nothing in the hold I'm afraid to have seen."

The boats were soon alongside; and two or three officers, with a handful of jackies, clambered aboard the brig.

"Muster your men aft, captain," said the leader, scorning any response

to the captain's salutation. "The king has need of a few fine fellows for his service."

"Surely, sir, you are not about to press any of these men," protested the captain. "They are just returning after a long voyage, and have not yet seen their families."

"What's that to me, sir?" was the response. "Muster your crew without more words."

Sullenly the men came aft, and ranged themselves in line before the boarding-officers. Each feared lest he might be one of those chosen to fill the ship's roll of the "Maidstone;" yet each cherished the hope that he might be spared to go ashore, and see the loved ones whose greeting he had so fondly anticipated.

The boarding-officers looked the crew over, and, after consulting together, gruffly ordered the men to go below, and pack up their traps.

"Surely you don't propose to take my entire crew?" said the captain of the brig in wondering indignation.

"I know my business, sir," was the gruff reply, "and I do not propose to suffer any more interference."

The crew of the brig soon came on deck, carrying their bags of clothes, and were ordered into the man-o'-war's boats, which speedily conveyed them to their floating prison. Their fond visions of home had been rudely dispelled. They were now enrolled in his Majesty's service, and subject to the will of a blue-coated tyrant. This was all their welcome home.

When the news of this cruel outrage reached the shore, the indignation of the people knew no bounds. The thought of their fellow-townsmen thus cruelly deprived of their liberty, at the conclusion of a long and perilous voyage, set the whole village in a turmoil. Wild plots were concocted for the destruction of the man-of-war, that, sullen and unyielding, lay at her anchorage in the harbor. But the wrong done was beyond redress. The captured men were not to be liberated. There was no ordnance in the little town to compete with the guns of the "Maidstone," and the enraged citizens could only vent their anger by impotent threats

and curses. Bands of angry men and boys paraded the streets, crying, "Down with the press-gang," and invoking the vengeance of Heaven upon the officers of the man-of-war. Finally, they found a boat belonging to the "Maidstone" lying at a wharf. Dragging this ashore, the crowd procured ropes, and, after pulling the captured trophy up and down the streets, took it to the common in front of the Court-House, where it was burned in the presence of a great crowd, which heaped execrations upon the heads of the officers of the "Maidstone," and King George's press-gang.

After this occurrence, there was a long truce between the people of Newport and the officers of the British navy. But the little town was intolerant of oppression, and the revolutionary spirit broke out again in 1769. Historians have eulogized Boston as the cradle of liberty, and by the British pamphleteers of that era the Massachusetts city was often called a hot-bed of rebellion. It would appear, however, that, while the people of Boston were resting contentedly under the king's rule, the citizens of Newport were chafing under the yoke, and were quick to resist any attempts at tyranny.

It is noticeable, that, in each outbreak of the people of Newport against the authority of the king's vessels, the vigor of the resistance increased, and their acts of retaliation became bolder. Thus in the affair of the "St. John" the king's vessel was fired on, while in the affair of the "Maidstone" the royal property was actually destroyed. In the later affairs with the sloop "Liberty" and the schooner "Gaspee," the revolt of the colonists was still more open, and the consequences more serious.

In 1769 the armed sloop "Liberty," Capt. Reid, was stationed in Narragansett Bay for the purpose of enforcing the revenue laws. Her errand made her obnoxious to the people on the coast, and the extraordinary zeal of her captain in discharging his duty made her doubly detested by seafaring people afloat or shore.

On the 17th of July the "Liberty," while cruising near the mouth of the bay, sighted a sloop and a brig under full sail, bound out. Promptly giving chase, the armed vessel soon overtook the merchantmen sufficiently to send a shot skipping along the crests of the waves, as a polite

invitation to stop. The two vessels hove to, and a boat was sent from the man-of-war to examine their papers, and see if all was right. Though no flaw was found in the papers of either vessel, Capt. Reid determined to take them back to Newport, which was done. In the harbor the two vessels were brought to anchor under the guns of the armed sloop, and without any reason or explanation were kept there several days. After submitting to this wanton detention for two days, Capt. Packwood of the brig went on board the "Liberty" to make a protest to Capt. Reid, and at the same time to get some wearing apparel taken from his cabin at the time his vessel had been captured. On reaching the deck of the armed vessel, he found Capt. Reid absent, and his request for his property was received with ridicule. Hot words soon led to violence; and as Capt. Packwood stepped in to his boat to return to his ship, he was fired at several times, none of the shots taking effect.

The news of this assault spread like wildfire in the little town. The people congregated on the streets, demanding reparation. The authorities sent a message to Capt. Reid, demanding that the man who fired the shots be given up. Soon a boat came from the "Liberty," bringing a man who was handed over to the authorities as the culprit. A brief examination into the case showed that the man was not the guilty party, and that his surrender was a mere subterfuge. The people then determined to be trifled with no longer, and made preparations to take vengeance upon the insolent oppressors.

The work of preparation went on quietly; and by nightfall a large number of men had agreed to assemble at a given signal, and march upon the enemy. Neither the authorities of the town nor the officers on the threatened vessel were given any intimation of the impending outbreak. Yet the knots of men who stood talking earnestly on the street corners, or looked significantly at the trim navy vessel lying in the harbor, might have well given cause for suspicion.

That night, just as the dusk was deepening into dark, a crowd of men marched down the street to a spot where a number of boats lay hidden in the shadow of a wharf. Embarking in these silently, they

bent to the oars at the whispered word of command; and the boats were soon gliding swiftly over the smooth, dark surface of the harbor, toward the sloop-of-war. As they drew near, the cry of the lookout rang out, —

"Boat ahoy!"

No answer. The boats, crowded with armed men, still advanced.

"Boat ahoy! Answer, or I'll fire."

And, receiving no response, the lookout gave the alarm, and the watch came tumbling up, just in time to be driven below or disarmed by the crowd of armed men that swarmed over the gunwale of the vessel. There was no bloodshed. The crew of the "Liberty" was fairly surprised, and made no resistance. The victorious citizens cut the sloop's cables, and allowed her to float on shore near Long Wharf. Then, feeling sure that their prey could not escape them, they cut away her masts, liberated their captives, and taking the sloop's boats, dragged them through the streets to the common, where they were burned on a triumphal bonfire, amid the cheers of the populace.

But the exploit was not to end here. With the high tide the next day, the hulk of the sloop floated away, and drifted ashore again on Goat Island. When night fell, some adventurous spirits stealthily went over, and, applying the torch to the stranded ship, burned it to the water's edge. Thus did the people of Newport resist tyranny.

It may well be imagined that so bold a defiance of the royal authority caused a great sensation. Prolonged and vigorous were the attempts of the servants of the king to find out the rebellious parties who had thus destroyed his Majesty's property. But their efforts were in vain. The identity of the captors of the "Liberty" was carefully concealed, and even to this day none of their names has become known. But, before the people of Newport had done talking about this affair, another outbreak occurred, which cast the capture and destruction of the "Liberty" into the shade.

This was the affair of the "Gaspee," — considered by many historians the virtual opening of the revolutionary struggle of the Colonies against Great Britain. The "Gaspee," like the "St. John" and the "Liberty,"

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DESTRUCTION OF THE "GASPEE."

was an armed vessel stationed in Narragansett Bay to enforce the revenue. She was commanded by Lieut. Dudingston of the British navy, and carried eight guns. By pursuing the usual tactics of the British officers stationed on the American coast, Duddingston had made himself hated; and his vessel was marked for destruction. Not a boat could pass between Providence and Newport without being subjected to search by the crew of the "Gaspee;" and the Yankee sailors swore darkly, that, when the time was ripe, they would put an end to the Britisher's officious meddling.

The propitious time arrived one bright June morning in the year 1772, when the "Gaspee" gave chase to a Newport packet which was scudding for Providence, under the command of Capt. Thomas Lindsey. The armed vessel was a clean-cut little craft, and, carrying no heavier load than a few light guns of the calibre then in vogue, could overhaul with ease almost any merchantman on the coast. So on this eventful day she was rapidly overhauling the chase, when, by a blunder of the pilot, she was run hard and fast upon a spit of sand running out from Namquit Point, and thus saw her projected prize sail away in triumph.

But the escape of her prize was not the greatest disaster that was to befall the "Gaspee" that day. Lindsey, finding himself safe from the clutches of the enemy, continued his course to Providence, and on arriving at that city reported the condition of the "Gaspee" to a prominent citizen, who straightway determined to organize an expedition for the destruction of the pest of marine traffic. He therefore gave orders to a trusty ship-master to collect eight of the largest long-boats in the harbor, and, having muffled their oars and rowlocks, place them at Fenner's Wharf, near a noted tavern.

That night, soon after sunset, as the tradesmen were shutting up their shops, and the laboring men were standing on the streets talking after their day's work, a man passed down the middle of each street, beating a drum, and crying aloud, —

"The schooner 'Gaspee' is ashore on Namquit Point. Who will help destroy her?"

All who expressed a desire to join in the enterprise were directed to repair to the Sabin House; and thither, later in the evening, flocked many of the townspeople, carrying guns, powder-flasks, and bullet-pouches. Within the house all was life and bustle. The great hall was crowded with determined men, discussing the plan of attack. Guns stood in every corner, while down in the kitchen a half a dozen men stood about a glowing fire busily casting bullets. At last, all being prepared, the party crossed the street to the dock, and embarked, — a veteran sea-captain taking the tiller of each boat.

On the way down the harbor the boats stopped, and took aboard a number of paving-stones and stout clubs, as weapons for those who had no muskets. After this stoppage the boats continued on their way, until, when within sixty yards of the "Gaspee," the long-drawn hail, "Who comes there?" rang out over the water. No answer was made, and the lookout quickly repeated his hail. Capt. Whipple, one of the leaders of the attack, then responded, —

"I want to come on board."

Dudingston, who was below at the time, rushed on deck, exclaiming, "Stand off. You can't come aboard."

As Dudingston stood at the side of the "Gaspee" warning off the assailants, he presented a good mark; and Joseph Bucklin, who pulled an oar in the leading boat, turned to a comrade and said, "Ephe, lend me your gun, and I can kill that fellow." The gun was accordingly handed him, and he fired. Dudingston fell to the deck. Just as the shot was fired, the leader of the assailants cried out, —

"I am sheriff of the county of Kent. I am come for the commander of this vessel; and have him I will, dead or alive. Men, spring to your oars."

In an instant the boats were under the lee of the schooner, and the attacking party was clambering over the side. The first man to attempt to board seized a rope, and was clambering up, when one of the British cut the rope, and let him fall into the water. He quickly recovered himself, and was soon on deck, where he found his comrades driving the crew of the "Gaspee" below, and meeting with but little resistance.

A surgeon who was with the party of Americans led the boarders below, and began the task of tying the hands of the captured crew with strong tarred cord. While thus engaged, he was called on deck.

"What is wanted, Mr. Brown?" asked he, calling the name of the person inquiring for him.

"Don't call names, but go immediately into the cabin," was the response. "There is one wounded, and will bleed to death."

The surgeon went into the captain's cabin, and there found Dudingston, severely wounded, and bleeding freely. Seeing no cloth suitable for bandages, the surgeon opened his vest, and began to tear his own shirt into strips to bind up the wound. With the tenderest care the hurt of the injured officer was attended to; and he was gently lowered into a boat, and rowed up the river to Providence.

The Americans remained in possession of the captured schooner, and quickly began the work of demolition. In the captain's cabin were a number of bottles of liquor, and for these the men made a rush; but the American surgeon dashed the bottles to pieces with the heels of his heavy boots, so that no scenes of drunkenness were enacted. After breaking up the furniture and trappings of the craft, her people were bundled over the side into the boats of their captors, and the torch was set to the schooner. The boats lay off a little distance until the roaring flames satisfied them that the "Gaspee" would never again annoy American merchantmen. As the schooner's shotted guns went off one after the other, the Americans turned their boats' prows homeward, and soon dispersed quietly to their homes.

It is almost incredible that the identity of the parties to this expedition was kept a secret until long after the Revolution. Although the British authorities made the most strenuous efforts, and offered huge rewards for the detection of the culprits, not one was discovered until after the Colonies had thrown off the royal yoke, when they came boldly forward, and boasted of their exploit.

After the destruction of the "Gaspee," the colonists in no way openly opposed the authority of the king, until the time of those stirring events.

immediately preceding the American Revolution. Little was done on the water to betoken the hatred of the colonists for King George. The turbulent little towns of Providence and Newport subsided, and the scene of revolt was transferred to Massachusetts, and particularly to Boston. In the streets of Boston occurred the famous massacre, and at the wharves of Boston lay the three ships whose cargo aroused the ire of the famous Boston tea-party.

To almost every young American the story of the Boston tea-party is as familiar as his own name, — how the British Parliament levied a tax upon tea, how the Colonies refused to pay it, and determined to use none of the article; how British merchants strove to force the tea upon the unwilling colonists, and how the latter refused to permit the vessels to unload, and in some cases drove them back to England. At Philadelphia, Annapolis, Charleston, Newport, and Providence, disturbances took place over the arrival of the tea-ships; but at Boston the turbulence was the greatest.

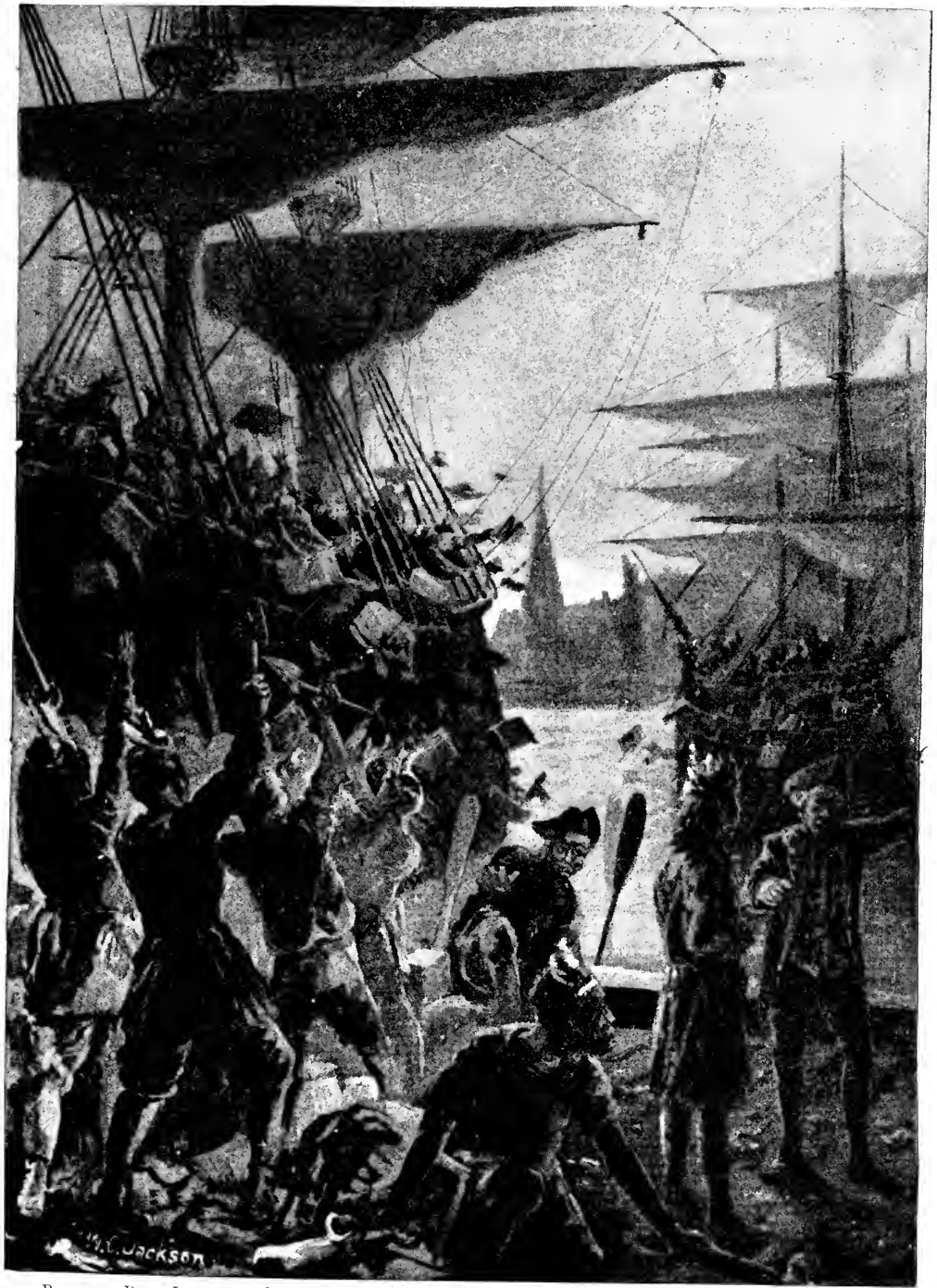
The story of that dramatic scene in the great drama of American revolution has been told too often to bear repetition. The arrival of three ships laden with tea aroused instant indignation in the New England city. Mass meetings were held, the captains of the vessels warned not to attempt to unload their cargoes, and the consignees were terrified into refusing to have any thing to do with the tea.

In the midst of an indignation meeting held at the Old South Church, a shrill war-whoop resounded from one of the galleries. The startled audience, looking in that direction, saw a person disguised as a Mohawk Indian, who wildly waved his arms and shouted, —

"Boston Harbor a tea-pot to-night! Hurrah for Griffin's Wharf."

In wild excitement the meeting adjourned, and the people crowded out into the streets. Other Indians were seen running down the streets in the direction of Griffin's Wharf, where the tea-ships were moored, and thither the people turned their steps.

On reaching the wharf, a scene of wild confusion was witnessed. The three tea-ships lay side by side at the wharf. Their decks were crowded



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THE BOSTON TEA-PARTY.

with men, many of them wearing the Indian disguise. The hatches were off the hatchways; and the chests of tea were being rapidly passed up, broken open, and thrown overboard. There was little noise, as the workers seemed to be well disciplined, and went about their work in the bright moonlight with systematic activity. In about three hours the work was done. Three hundred and forty-two chests of tea had been thrown overboard, and the rioters dispersed quietly to their homes.

The incident of the destruction of the tea in Boston Harbor was the last of the petty incidents that led up to the American Revolution. Following quick upon it came Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, — then the great conflict was fairly under way, and the Colonies were fighting for liberty. What part the sailors of the colonies took in that struggle, it is the purpose of this book to recount.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEGINNING OF THE NAVY. — LEXINGTON AND CONCORD. — A BLOW STRUCK IN MAINE. — CAPTURE OF THE "MARGARETTA." — GEN. WASHINGTON AND THE NAVY. — WORK OF CAPT. MANLY.

IN TREATING of the history of the navy during the war of the Revolution, we must always bear in mind the fact, that, during the greater part of that war, there was no navy. Indeed, the subject presents much the same aspect as the celebrated chapter on snakes in Ireland, which consisted of exactly six words, "There are no snakes in Ireland." So many of the episodes and incidents of the Revolutionary war that we chronicle as part of the naval history of that struggle are naval only in that they took place on the water. The participants in them were often longshoremen, fishermen, or privateersmen, and but seldom sailors enrolled in the regular navy of the united colonies. Nevertheless, these irregular forces accomplished some results that would be creditable to a navy in the highest state of efficiency and discipline.

The expense of building vessels-of-war, and the difficulty, amounting even to impossibility, of procuring cannon for their armament, deterred the Colonies from equipping a naval force. All the energies of the revolutionists were directed towards organizing and equipping the army. The cause of independence upon the ocean was left to shift for itself. But, as the war spread, the depredations of British vessels along the coast became so intolerable that some colonies fitted out armed vessels for self-protection. Private enterprise sent out many privateers to prey upon British commerce,

so that the opening months of the year 1776 saw many vessels on the ocean to support the cause of the Colonies. To man these vessels, there were plenty of sailors; for even at that early day New England had begun to develop that race of hardy seamen for which she is still noted in this day of decadence in the American marine. There was, however, a sad lack of trained officers to command the vessels of the infant navy. Many Americans were enrolled on the lists of the ships flying the royal banner of England, but most of these remained in the British service. The men, therefore, who were to command the ships of the colonies, were trained in the rough school of the merchant service, and had smelt gunpowder only when resisting piratical attacks, or in serving themselves as privateers.

For these reasons the encounters and exploits that we shall consider as being part of the naval operations of the Revolutionary war were of a kind that would to-day be regarded as insignificant skirmishes; and the naval officer of to-day would look with supreme contempt upon most of his brethren of '76, as so many untrained sea-guerillas. Nevertheless, the achievements of some of the seamen of the Revolution are not insignificant, even when compared with exploits of the era of Farragut; and it must be remembered that the efforts of the devoted men were directed against a nation that had in commission at the opening of the war three hundred and fifty-three vessels, and even then bore proudly the title conferred upon her by the consent of all nations, — "The Mistress of the Seas."

It was on the 19th of April, 1775, that the redoubtable Major Pitcairn and his corps of scarlet-coated British regulars shot down the colonists on the green at Lexington, and then fled back to Boston followed by the enraged minute-men, who harassed the retreating red-coats with a constant fire of musketry. The news of the battle spread far and wide; and wherever the story was told, the colonists began arming themselves, and preparing for resistance to the continually increasing despotism of the British authorities.

On the 9th of May, a coasting schooner from Boston put into the

little seaport of Machias on the coast of Maine. The people of the little town gathered at the wharf, and from the sailors first heard the story of Lexington and Concord. The yoke of the British Government had rested lightly on the shoulders of the people of Machias. Far from the chief cities of the New World, they had heard little of the continued dissensions between the Colonies and the home Government, and they heard the story of the rebellion with amazement. But however unprepared they might have been for the news of the outbreak, their sympathies went warmly out to their struggling brethren, and they determined to place themselves shoulder to shoulder with the Massachusetts colonists in the fight against the oppression of the British. Their opportunity for action came that very night.

As the sturdy young colonists stood on the deck listening to the stories of the newly arrived sailors, they could see floating lightly at anchor near the wharf a trimly rigged schooner flying the ensign of the British navy. This craft was the "Margaretta," an armed schooner acting as convoy to two sloops that were then loading with ship-timber to be used in the service of the king.

The Boston sailors had not yet finished their narrative of the two battles, when the thought occurred to some of the adventurous listeners that they might strike a retaliatory blow by capturing the "Margaretta." Therefore, bidding the sailors to say nothing to the British of Lexington and Concord, they left the wharf and dispersed through the town, seeking for recruits. That same evening, sixty stalwart men assembled in a secluded farm-house, and laid their plans for the destruction of the schooner. It was then Saturday night, and the conspirators determined to attack the vessel the next morning while the officers were at church. All were to proceed by twos and threes to the wharf, in order that no suspicion might be aroused. Once at the water-side, they would rush to their boats, and carry the schooner by boarding.

Sunday morning dawned clear, and all seemed propitious for the conspirators. The "Margaretta" had then been in port for more than a week, and her officers had no reason to doubt the loyalty and friendship of

the inhabitants: no whisper of the occurrences in Massachusetts, nor any hint of the purposes of the people of Machias, had reached their ears. Therefore, on this peaceful May morning, Capt. Moore donned his full-dress uniform, and with his brother officers proceeded to the little church in the village.

Every thing then seemed favorable to the success of the adventure. The "Margaretta," manned by a sleepy crew, and deserted by her officers, lay within easy distance of the shore. It seemed as though the conspirators had only to divide into two parties; and while the one surrounded the church, and captured the worshipping officers, the others might descend upon the schooner, and easily make themselves masters of all.

But the plot failed. History fails to record just how or why the suspicions of Capt. Moore were aroused. Whether it was that the wary captain noticed the absence of most of the young men of the congregation, or whether he saw the conspirators assembling on the dock, is not known. But certain it is that the good dominie in the pulpit, and the pious people in the pews, were mightily startled by the sudden uprisal of Capt. Moore, who sprang from his seat, and, calling upon his officers to follow him, leaped through the great window of the church, and ran like mad for the shore, followed by the rest of the naval party.

There was no more church for the good people of Machias that morning. Even the preacher came down from his pulpit to stare through his horn-rimmed glasses at the retreating forms of his whilom listeners. And, as he stood in blank amazement at the church door, he saw a large party of the missing young men of his congregation come dashing down the street in hot pursuit of the retreating mariners. In their hands, the pursuers carried sabres, cutlasses, old flint-lock muskets, cumbrous horse-pistols, scythes, and reaping-hooks. The pursued wore no arms; and, as no boat awaited them at the shore, their case looked hopeless indeed. But the old salt left in charge of the schooner was equal to the occasion. The unsabbath-like tumult on the shore quickly attracted his attention, and with unfeigned astonishment he had observed his commander's unseemly egress from the church. But, when the armed

band of colonists appeared upon the scene, he ceased to rub his eyes in wonder, and quickly loaded up a swivel gun, with which he let fly, over the heads of his officers, and in dangerous proximity to the advancing colonists. This fire checked the advance of the conspirators; and, while they wavered and hung back, a boat put off from the schooner, and soon took the officers aboard. Then, after firing a few solid shot over the town, merely as an admonition of what might be expected if the hot-headed young men persisted in their violent outbreaks, the "Margaretta" dropped down the bay to a more secluded anchorage.

The defeated conspirators were vastly chagrined at the miscarriage of their plot; but, nothing daunted, they resolved to attempt to carry the schooner by assault, since strategy had failed. Therefore, early the next morning, four young men seized upon a sloop, and, bringing her up to the wharf, cheered lustily. A crowd soon gathered, and the project was explained, and volunteers called for. Thirty-five hardy sailors and woodmen hastily armed themselves with muskets, pitchforks, and axes; and, after taking aboard a small supply of provisions, the sloop dropped down the harbor toward the "Margaretta." The captain of the threatened schooner had observed through his spy-glass the proceedings at the wharf, and suspected his danger. He was utterly ignorant of the reason for this sudden hostility on the part of the people of Machias. He knew nothing of the quarrel that had thus provoked the rebellion of the colonies. Therefore, he sought to avoid a conflict; and, upon the approach of the sloop, he hoisted his anchor, and fled down the bay.

The sloop followed in hot haste. The Yankees crowded forward, and shouted taunts and jeers at their more powerful enemy who thus strove to avoid the conflict. Both vessels were under full sail; and the size of the schooner was beginning to tell, when, in jibing, she carried away her main boom. Nevertheless, she was so far ahead of the sloop that she was able to put into Holmes Bay, and take a spar out of a vessel lying there, before the sloop overtook her. But the delay incident upon changing the spars brought the sloop within range; and Capt. Moore, still anxious to avoid an encounter, cut away his boats, and stood out to sea.

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THE FIGHT AT MACHIAS.

With plenty of sea room, and with a spanking breeze on the quarter, the sloop proved to be the better sailer. Moore then prepared for battle, and, as the sloop overhauled him, let fly one of his swivels, following it immediately with his whole broadside, killing one man. The sloop returned the fire with her one piece of ordnance, which was so well aimed as to kill the man at the helm of the "Margaretta," and clear her quarter-deck. The two vessels then closed, and a hand-to-hand battle began, in which muskets, hand-grenades, pikes, pitchforks, and cutlasses were used with deadly effect. The colonists strove to board their enemy, but were repeatedly beaten back. If any had thought that Capt. Moore's continued efforts to avoid a conflict were signs of cowardice, they were quickly undeceived; for that officer fought like a tiger, standing on the quarter-deck rail, cheering on his men, and hurling hand-grenades down upon his assailants, until a shot brought him down. The fall of their captain disheartened the British; and the Americans quickly swarmed over the sides of the "Margaretta," and drove her crew below.

This victory was no mean achievement for the colonists. The "Margaretta" was vastly the superior, both in metal and in the strength of her crew. She was ably officered by trained and courageous seamen; while the Yankees had no leaders save one Jeremiah O'Brien, whom they had elected, by acclamation, captain. That the Americans had so quickly brought their more powerful foe to terms, spoke volumes for their pluck and determination. Nor were they content to rest with the capture of the schooner. Transferring her armament to the sloop, O'Brien set out in search of prizes, and soon fell in with, and captured, two small British cruisers. These he took to Watertown, where the Massachusetts Legislature was then in session. The news of his victory was received with vast enthusiasm; and the Legislature conferred upon him the rank of captain, and ordered him to set out on another cruise, and particularly watch out for British vessels bringing over provisions or munitions of war to the king's troops in America.

But by this time Great Britain was aroused. The king saw all America up in arms against his authority, and he determined to punish

the rebellious colonists. A naval expedition was therefore sent against Falmouth, and that unfortunate town was given to the flames. The Legislature of Massachusetts then passed a law granting commissions to privateers, and directing the seizure of British ships. Thereafter the hostilities on the ocean, which had been previously unauthorized and somewhat piratical, had the stamp of legislative authority.

Petty hostilities along the coast were very active during the first few months of the war. The exploits of Capt. O'Brien stirred up seamen from Maine to the Carolinas, and luckless indeed was the British vessel that fell into their clutches. At Providence two armed American vessels re-took a Yankee brig and sloop that had been captured by the British. At Dartmouth a party of soldiers captured a British armed brig. In addition to these exploits, the success of the American privateers, which had got to sea in great numbers, added greatly to the credit of the American cause.

The first order looking toward the establishment of a national navy was given by Gen. Washington in the latter part of 1775. The sagacious general, knowing that the British forces in Boston were supplied with provisions and munitions of war by sea, conceived the idea of fitting out some swift-sailing cruisers to intercept the enemy's cruisers, and cut off their supplies. Accordingly, on his own authority, he sent out Capt. Broughton with two armed schooners belonging to the colony of Massachusetts. Broughton was ordered to intercept two brigs bound for Quebec with military stores. This he failed to do, but brought in ten other vessels. Congress, however, directed the release of the captured ships, as it was then intended only to take such vessels as were actually employed in the king's service.

By this time Congress had become convinced that some naval force was absolutely essential to the success of the American cause. In October, 1775, it therefore fitted out, and ordered to sea, a number of small vessels. Of these the first to sail was the "Lee," under command of Capt. John Manly, whose honorable name, won in the opening years of the Revolution, fairly entitles him to the station of the father of the American navy.

With his swift cruiser, Manly patrolled the New England coast, and was marvellously successful in capturing British store-ships. Washington wrote to Congress, "I am in very great want of powder, lead, mortars, and, indeed, most sorts of military stores." Hardly had the letter been forwarded, when Manly appeared in port with a prize heavy laden with just the goods for which the commander-in-chief had applied. A queer coincidence is on record regarding these captured stores. Samuel Tucker, an able Yankee seaman, later an officer in the American navy, was on the docks at Liverpool as a transport was loading for America. As he saw the great cases of guns and barrels of powder marked "Boston" being lowered into the hold of the vessel, he said to a friend who stood with him, "I would walk barefoot one hundred miles, if by that means these arms could only take the direction of Cambridge." Three months later Tucker was in Washington's camp at Cambridge, and there saw the very arms he had so coveted on the Liverpool docks. They had been captured by Capt. Manly.

Manly's activity proved very harassing to the British, and the sloop-of-war "Falcon" was sent out to capture the Yankee. She fell in with the "Lee" near Gloucester, just as the latter was making for that port with a merchant schooner in convoy. Manly, seeing that the Englishman was too heavy for him, deserted his convoy and ran into the port, where he anchored, out of reach of the sloop's guns. Capt. Lindzee of the "Falcon" stopped to capture the abandoned schooner, and then taking his vessel to the mouth of the port, anchored her in such a way as to prevent any escape for the "Lee." He then prepared to capture the Yankee by boarding. The "Falcon" drew too much water to run alongside the "Lee" at the anchorage Manly had chosen; and the Englishman therefore put his men in large barges, and with a force of about forty men set out to capture the schooner. Manly saw the force that was to be brought against him, and sent his men to quarters, preparing for a desperate resistance. The schooner was lying near the shore; and the townspeople and militia gathered by the water-side, with guns in their hands, prepared to lend their aid to the brave defenders of the "Lee."

As the three barges drew near the schooner, Manly mounted the rail, and hailed them, warning them to keep off lest he fire upon them.

"Fire, and be hanged to you," was the response of the lieutenant in command of the assailants. "We have no fear of traitors."

So saying, the British pressed on through a fierce storm of musketry from the deck of the schooner and from the shore. They showed no lack of courage. The lieutenant himself brought his boat under the cabin windows, and was in the act of boarding, when a shot from the shore struck him in the thigh, and he was carried back to the man-of-war. Capt. Lindzee, who had watched the progress of the fight from the deck of the "Falcon," was greatly enraged when his lieutenant was thus disabled; and he hastily despatched re-enforcements to the scene of action, and directed the gunners on the "Falcon" to commence a cannonade of the town.

"Now," said he with an oath, "my boys, we will aim at the Presbyterian church. Well, my brave fellows, one shot more, and the house of God will fall before you."

But the British were fairly outfought, and the outcome of the battle was disastrous to them. A newspaper of the period, speaking of the fight says, "Under God, our little party at the waterside performed wonders; for they soon made themselves masters of both the schooners, the cutter, the two barges, the boat, and every man in them, and all that pertained to them. In the action, which lasted several hours, we have lost but one man; two others wounded, — one of whom is since dead, the other very slightly wounded. We took of the man-of-war's men thirty-five; several are wounded, and one since dead; twenty-four are sent to head-quarters. The remainder, being impressed from this and neighboring towns, are permitted to return to their friends. This morning Capt. Lindzee warped off with but one-half of his men, with neither a prize-boat nor tender, except a small skiff the wounded lieutenant returned in."

The work done by the small armed schooners of which the "Lee" was a type encouraged Congress to proceed with the work of organizing a regular navy; and by the end of 1775 that body had authorized the

building of thirteen war-vessels carrying from twenty-four to thirty-two guns each. But as some naval force was obviously necessary during the construction of this fleet, five vessels were procured, and the new navy was organized with the following roster of officers: —

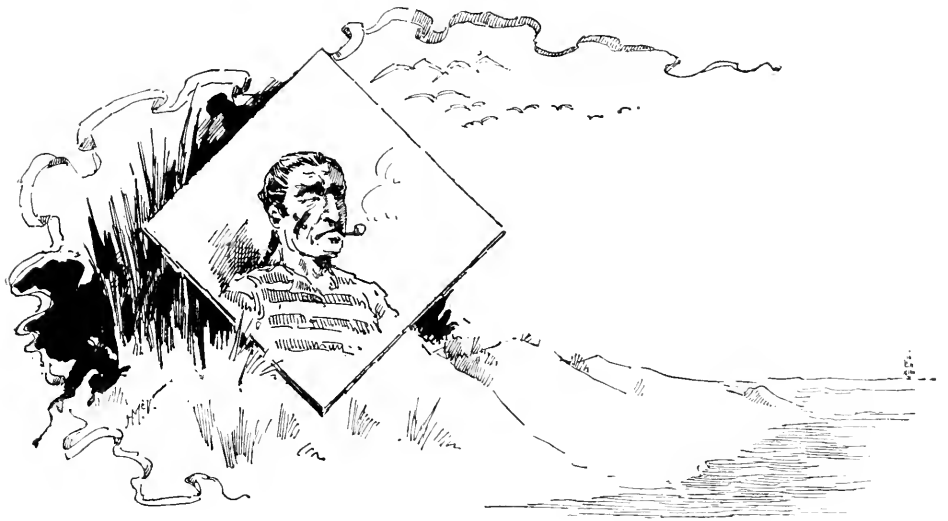
Esek Hopkins	*Commander-in-chief.*
Dudley Saltonstall	*Captain of the "Alfred."*
Abraham Whipple	*Captain of the "Columbus."*
Nicholas Biddle	*Captain of the "Andrea Doria."*
John B. Hopkins	*Captain of the "Cabot."*

A long list of lieutenants was also provided, among whom stands out boldly the name of John Paul Jones. John Manly, whose dashing work in the shooner "Lee" we have already noticed, was left in command of his little craft until the thirty-two-gun ship "Hancock" was completed, when he was put in charge of her.

It may possibly have occurred to some of my readers to wonder what flag floated from the mastheads of these ships. There is much confusion upon this point, and not a little uncertainty. There were three classes of American armed vessels on the seas. First were the privateers, that sailed under any flag that might suit their purpose. Next came the vessels fitted out and commissioned by the individual colonies; these usually floated the flag of the colony from which they hailed. Last came the vessels commissioned by Congress, which at the outset floated many banners of diverse kinds. It fell to the lot of Lieut. Paul Jones, however, to hoist the first authorized American flag over a regularly commissioned vessel-of-war. This flag was of bunting, showing a pine-tree on a plain white ground, with the words "Liberty Tree" and "Appeal to God" prominently displayed. This flag was chiefly used until the adoption of the stars and stripes. The "rattlesnake flag," with a reptile in the act of striking, and the legend "Don't tread on me," was largely used by the privateers.

The year 1775 closed with but little activity upon the ocean. The ships of the regular navy were late in getting into commission, and an

early winter impeded their usefulness. Some little work was done by privateers and the ships of the different colonies, and the ships of the British navy were kept fully occupied in guarding against the operations of these gentry. The man-of-war "Nautilus" chased an American privateer into a little cove near Beverly, and in the heat of the chase both vessels ran aground. The people on shore put off to the privateer, and quickly stripped her of her cordage and armament, and with the guns built a small battery by the water-side, from which they opened a telling fire upon the stranded "Nautilus." The man-of-war returned in kind, and did some slight damage to the town; but when the tide had risen she slipped her cables and departed. Such desultory encounters were of frequent occurrence, but no naval battles of any importance took place until the spring of 1776.



CHAPTER V.

EVENTS OF 1776. — THE FIRST CRUISE OF THE REGULAR NAVY. — THE "LEXINGTON" AND THE "EDWARD." — MUGFORD'S BRAVE FIGHT. — LOSS OF THE "YANKEE HERO." — CAPT. MANLY, AND THE "DEFENCE." — AMERICAN VESSELS IN EUROPEAN WATERS. — GOOD WORK OF THE "LEXINGTON" AND THE "REPRISAL." — THE BRITISH DEFEATED AT CHARLESTON.

THE year 1776 witnessed some good service done for the cause of liberty by the little colonial navy. The squadron, under the command of Ezekiel Hopkins, left the Delaware in February, as soon as the ice had left the river, and made a descent upon the island of New Providence, where the British had established a naval station. The force under Hopkins consisted of seven vessels-of-war, and one despatch-boat. The attack was successful in every way, a landing party of three hundred marines and sailors which was sent ashore meeting with but little resistance from the British garrison. By this exploit, the Americans captured over a hundred cannon, and a great quantity of naval stores.

After this exploit, Hopkins left New Providence, carrying away with him the governor and one or two notable citizens, and continued his

cruise. His course was shaped to the northward, and early in April he found himself off the shore of Long Island. He had picked up a couple of insignificant British vessels, — one a tender of six guns, and the other an eight-gun bomb-brig. But his cruise had been mainly barren of results; and his crew, who had looked forward to sharp service and plenty of prize-money, were beginning to grumble. But their inactivity was not of long duration; for, before daylight on the morning of April 6, the lookout at the masthead of the "Alfred" sighted a large ship, bearing down upon the American squadron. The night was clear and beautiful, the wind light, and the sea smooth; and so, although it lacked several hours to daylight, the commanders determined to give battle to the stranger. Soon, therefore, the roll of the drums beating to quarters was heard over the water, and the angry glare of the battle lanterns on the gun-decks made the open ports of the war-ships stand out like fiery eyes against the black hulls. The Englishman, who proved later to be the "Glasgow," twenty guns, carrying one hundred and fifty men, might easily have escaped; but, apparently undaunted by the odds against him, he awaited the attack. The little "Cabot" was the first American ship to open fire on the enemy. Her attack, though sharp and plucky, was injudicious; for two of the Englishman's heavy broadsides were enough to send her out of the battle for repairs. The "Glasgow" and the "Alfred" then took up the fight, and exchanged repeated broadsides; the American vessel suffering the more serious injuries of the two. After some hours of this fighting, the "Glasgow" hauled away, and made good her escape, although she was almost surrounded by the vessels of the American squadron. It would seem that only the most careless seamanship on the part of the Americans could have enabled a twenty-gun vessel to escape from four vessels, each one of which was singly almost a match for her. It is evident that the Continental Congress took the same view of the matter, for Hopkins was soon after dismissed from the service.

This action was little to the credit of the sailors of the colonial navy. Fortunately, a second action during the same month set them in

a better light before the people of the country. This was the encounter of the "Lexington," Capt. Barry, with the British vessel "Edward," off the capes of Virginia. The two vessels were laid yard-arm to yard-arm; and a hot battle ensued, in which the Americans came off the victors. The career of this little American brig was a rather remarkable one. The year following her capture of the "Edward," she was again off the capes of the Delaware, and again fell in with a British ship. This time, however, the Englishman was a frigate, and the luckless "Lexington" was forced to surrender. Her captor left the Americans aboard their own craft, and, putting a prize-crew aboard, ordered them to follow in the wake of the frigate. That night the Americans plotted the recapture of their vessel. By a concerted movement, they overpowered their captors; and the "Lexington" was taken into Baltimore, where she was soon recommissioned, and ordered to cruise in European waters.

Shortly after the battle between the "Lexington" and the "Edward," there was fought in Massachusetts Bay an action in which the Americans showed the most determined bravery, and which for the courage shown, and losses suffered on either side, may well be regarded as the most important of the naval battles of that year. Early in May, a merchant seaman named Mugford had succeeded, after great importunity, in securing the command of the armed vessel "Franklin," a small cruiser mounting only four guns. The naval authorities had been unwilling to give him the command, though he showed great zeal in pressing his suit. Indeed, after the appointment had been made, certain damaging rumors concerning the newly appointed captain reached the ears of the marine committee, and caused them to send an express messenger to Boston to cancel Mugford's commission. But the order arrived too late. Mugford had already fitted out his ship, and sailed. He had been but a few days at sea, when the British ship "Hope," of four hundred tons and mounting six guns, hove in sight. More than this, the lookout reported that the fleet of the British commodore Banks lay but a few miles away, and in plain sight. Many a man would have been daunted by such odds. Not so Capt. Mugford. Mustering his men, he showed them the British ship,

told them that she carried heavier metal than the "Franklin," told them that the British fleet lay near at hand, and would doubtless try to take a hand in the engagement; then, having pointed out all the odds against them, he said, "Now, my lads, it's a desperate case; but we can take her, and win lots of glory and prize-money. Will you stand by me?"

The jackies wasted no time in debate, but, cheering lustily for the captain, went to their posts, and made ready for a hot fight. The naval discipline of the present day was little known, and less observed, at that time in the American navy. The perfect order which makes the gun-deck of a ship going into action as quiet and solemn as during Sunday prayers, then gave place to excited talk and bustle. The men stood in crews at the four guns; but most of the jackies were mustered on the forecastle, ready to board. All expected a desperate resistance. Great was their surprise, then, when they were permitted to take a raking position under the stern of the "Hope," and to board her without a shot being fired. But as Mugford, at the head of the boarders, clambered over the taffrail, he heard the captain of the "Hope" order the men to cut the topsail halliards and ties, with the intention of so crippling the ship that the British squadron might overhaul and recapture her.

"Avast there!" bawled Mugford, seeing through the plot in an instant, and clapping a pistol to the head of the captain; "if a knife is touched to those ropes, not a man of this crew shall live."

This threat so terrified the captured sailors, that they relinquished their design; and Mugford, crowding all sail on his prize, soon was bowling along before a stiff breeze, with the British squadron in hot pursuit. An examination of the ship's papers showed her to be the most valuable prize yet taken by the Americans. In her hold were fifteen hundred barrels of powder, a thousand carbines, a great number of travelling carriages for cannon, and a most complete assortment of artillery instruments and pioneer tools. While running for Boston Harbor, through the channel known as Point Shirley gut, the vessel grounded, but was soon floated, and taken safely to her anchorage. Her arrival was most

timely, as the American army was in the most dire straits for gunpowder. It may well be imagined that there was no longer any talk about revoking Capt. Mugford's commission.

Mugford remained in port only long enough to take a supply of powder from his prize; then put to sea again. He well knew that the British fleet that had chased him into Boston Harbor was still blockading the harbor's mouth, but he hoped to evade it by going out through a circuitous channel. Unluckily, in thus attempting to avoid the enemy, the "Franklin," ran aground, and there remained hard and fast in full view of the enemy. He had as consort the privateer schooner "Lady Washington," whose captain, seeing Mugford's dangerous predicament, volunteered to remain near at hand and assist in the defence.

Mugford knew that his case was desperate, and made preparations for a most determined resistance. Swinging his craft around, he mounted all four of his guns on that side which commanded the channel in the direction from which the enemy was expected. Boarding-nettings were triced up, and strengthened with cables and cordage, to make an effective barrier against the assaults of boarders. The men were served with double rations of grog, and set to work sharpening the cutlasses and spears, with which they were well provided. The work of preparation was completed none too soon; for about nine o'clock Mugford heard the rattle of oars in rowlocks, and saw boats gliding towards the "Franklin" through the darkness.

"Boat ahoy!" he challenged. "Keep off, or I shall fire into you."

"Don't fire," was the response; "we are friends from Boston coming to your aid."

"We want none of your aid," cried Mugford with an oath. Then, turning to his crew, he shouted, "Let them have it, boys."

The roar of the cannon then mingled with the rattle of the musketry, the cries of the wounded, and the shouts and curses of the combatants, as the British strove to clamber up the sides of the "Franklin." Not less than two hundred men were engaged on the side of the British, who advanced to the fray in thirteen large barges, many of them carrying

swivel guns. Several boats dashed in close under the side of the "Franklin," and their crews strove manfully to board, but were beaten back by the Yankees, who rained cutlass blows upon them. The long pikes with which the Americans were armed proved particularly effective. "One man with that weapon is positive of having killed nine of the enemy," says a newspaper of that day.

Unhappily, however, the heroic Mugford, while urging on his men to a more vigorous resistance, was struck by a musket-ball, which inflicted a mortal wound. At the moment the wound was received, he was reaching out over the quarter to catch hold of the mast of one of the barges, in the hope of upsetting her. As he fell to the deck, he called his first lieutenant, and said, "I am a dead man. Do not give up the vessel; you will be able to beat them off." Nearly forty years after, the heroic Lawrence, dying on the deck of the "Chesapeake," repeated Mugford's words, "Don't give up the ship."

For about half an hour the battle raged fiercely. The British, beaten back with great loss, returned again and again to the attack. The boats would come under the lee of the "Franklin;" but, not being provided with grappling-irons, the British were forced to lay hold of the gunwales of the enemy with their hands, which the Americans promptly lopped off with their cutlasses. Shots from the swivel guns of the Yankee soon stove in two of the boats of the enemy, which sunk, carrying down many of their crew. After nearly an hour of this desperate fighting, the British withdrew, having lost about seventy men. The only loss sustained by the Americans was that of their brave commander Mugford.

About a month after this battle, there occurred off the coast of Massachusetts a battle in which the Americans, though they fought with the most undaunted bravery, were forced to strike their colors to their adversary. The American was the privateer "Yankee Hero" of Newburyport. She sailed from that place for Boston on the 7th of June with only forty men aboard, intending to ship her full complement of one hundred and twenty at Boston. As the "Hero" rounded Cape Ann, she sighted a sail on the horizon, but in her short-handed condition did not

think it worth while to give chase. The stranger, however, had caught sight of the "Hero;" and, a fresh southerly breeze springing up, she began to close with the American. As she came closer, Capt. Tracy of the "Yankee Hero" saw that she was a ship-of-war. Despite the desperate efforts of the Americans to escape, their pursuer rapidly overhauled them, and soon coming up within half a mile, opened fire with her bow chasers. The brig returned the fire with a swivel gun, which had little effect. Seeing this, Capt. Tracy ordered the firing to cease until the ships should came to close quarters. The stranger rapidly overhauled the privateer, keeping up all the time a vigorous fire. Tracy with difficulty restrained the ardor of his men, who were anxious to try to cripple their pursuer. When the enemy came within pistol-shot, Tracy saw that the time for action on his part had come, and immediately opened fire with all the guns and small-arms that could be brought to bear. The only possible chance for escape lay in crippling the big craft with a lucky shot; but broadside after broadside was fired, and still the great ship came rushing along in the wake of the flying privateer. Closer and closer drew the bulky man-of-war, until her bow crept past the stern of the "Yankee Hero," and the marines upon her forecastle poured down a destructive volley of musketry upon the brig's crowded deck. The plight of the privateer was now a desperate one. Her heavy antagonist was close alongside, and towered high above her, so that the marines on the quarter-deck and forecastle of the Englishman were on a level with the leading blocks of the Yankee. From the depressed guns of the frigate, a murderous fire poured down upon the smaller craft. For an hour and twenty minutes the two vessels continued the fight, pouring hot broadsides into each other, and separated by less than a hundred feet of water. The brisk breeze blowing carried away the clouds of smoke, and left the men on the deck of the Yankee no protection from sharp-shooters on the enemy's deck. Accordingly, the execution was frightful. Tracy, from his post on the quarter-deck, saw his men falling like sheep, while the continual volleys of the great ship had so cut the cordage of the weaker vessel that escape was impossible. At last a musket-ball struck Capt. Tracy in the thigh,

and he fell bleeding to the deck. For a moment his men wavered at their guns; but he called manfully to them, from where he lay, to fight on boldly for the honor of the "Yankee Hero." Two petty officers had rushed to his assistance; and he directed them to lay him upon a chest of arms upon the quarter-deck, whence he might direct the course of the battle. But, strong though was his spirit, his body was too weak to perform the task he had allotted it; and, growing faint from pain and loss of blood, he was carried below.

He lay unconscious for a few minutes, but was recalled to his senses by the piteous cries of wounded men by whom he was surrounded. When he came to himself, he saw the cabin filled with grievously wounded people, bleeding and suffering for lack of surgical aid. The firing of the privateer had ceased, but the enemy was still pouring in pitiless broadsides. Enraged at this spectacle, Capt. Tracy ordered his men to re-open the conflict, and directed that he be taken in a chair to the quarter-deck. But, on getting into the chair, he was suddenly seized with a fainting spell, and gave orders, by signs, that the colors be struck.

When the inequality of the two enemies is considered, this action appears to be a most notable reason for pride in the powers of the Americans. The "Yankee Hero" was a low single-decked vessel of fourteen guns, while her captor was the British frigate of thirty-two guns. Yet the little American vessel had held her own for two hours, and by good gunnery and skilful manœuvring had succeeded in doing almost as much damage as she had suffered.

In reading of the naval engagements of the Revolution, one is impressed with the small sacrifice of life that attended the most protracted conflicts. Thus in the action just recorded only four men were killed upon the defeated ship, although for more than an hour the two vessels had exchanged broadsides a distance of less than a hundred feet apart. The execution done on the British frigate has never been recorded, but was probably even less.

Only the most fragmentary account can be given of any naval actions in the year 1776, except those in which America's great naval hero

Paul Jones took part. Of the trivial encounters that go to complete the naval annals of the year, only the briefest recountal is necessary. The work of the little brig "Andrea Doria," Capt. Biddle, deserves a passing mention. This little fourteen-gun craft had the most wonderful luck in making prizes. Besides capturing two transports loaded with British soldiers, she took so many merchantmen, that on one cruise she brought back to port only five of her original crew, the rest having all been put aboard prizes.

On the 17th of June, the crew of the Connecticut cruiser "Defence," a fourteen-gun brig, heard the sound of distant cannonading coming faintly over the water. All sail was crowded upon the brig, and she made all possible speed to the scene of conflict. About nightfall, she fell in with four American schooners that had just been having a tussle with two heavy British transports. Three of the American vessels were privateers, the fourth was the little cruiser "Lee" in which Capt. John Manly had done such brilliant service. The four schooners had found the transports too powerful for them, and had therefore drawn off, but were eager to renew the fray with the help of the "Defence." Accordingly the "Defence" led the way to Nantasket Roads, where the transports lay at anchor. Capt. Harding wasted little time in manœuvring, but, laying his vessel alongside the larger of the two transports, summoned her commander to strike.

"Ay, ay — I'll strike," was the response from the threatened vessel; and instantly a heavy broadside was poured into the "Defence." A sharp action followed, lasting for nearly an hour. The "Defence" bore the brunt of the conflict, for the four schooners did not come to sufficiently close quarters to be of much assistance against the enemy. The gunnery of the Americans proved too much for the enemy, however; and after losing eighteen men, together with a large number wounded, the British surrendered. The American vessel was a good deal cut up aloft, and lost nine of her men. The next morning a third transport was sighted by the "Defence," and speedily overhauled and captured. More than five hundred British soldiers were thus captured; and the British thenceforward

dared not treat the Americans as rebels, lest the colonial army authorities should retaliate upon the British prisoners in their hands.

It was in the year 1776 that the first naval vessel giving allegiance to the American Colonies showed herself in European waters. This vessel was the "Reprisal," Capt. Wickes, a small craft, mounting sixteen guns. Early in the summer of '76, the "Reprisal" made a cruise to Martinique, taking several prizes. When near the island, she encountered the British sloop-of-war "Shark," and a sharp battle ensued. In size and weight of metal, the two vessels were about evenly matched; but the "Reprisal" had been sending out so many prize-crews, that she was short eighty men of her full crew. Therefore, when, after a brisk interchange of broadsides, the British sloop sheered off, and left the "Reprisal" to continue her course, Capt. Wickes rejoiced in his escape as being almost equal to a victory.

After completing this cruise, the "Reprisal" was ordered to France for the purpose of conveying thither from Philadelphia Benjamin Franklin, the ambassador sent from the Colonies to interest the French in the cause of American liberty. While on the way over, she took two or three prizes, which were sold in France. After landing her distinguished passenger, she cruised about in the proverbially tempestuous Bay of Biscay, where she forced several British vessels to strike to the American flag, then first seen in those waters. On returning to France to sell his newly captured prizes, Capt. Wickes found trouble in store for him. The British ambassador at Paris had declared that the American cruiser was a detestable pirate; and that for France to permit the pirate to anchor in her harbors, or sell his prizes in her markets, was equal to a declaration of war against England. Wickes was, therefore, admonished to take his ships and prisoners away. But even in that early day Yankee wit was sharp, and able to extricate its possessor from troublesome scrapes. Wickes knew that there were plenty of purchasers to be had for his prizes: so, gathering a few ship-owners together, he took them out to sea beyond the jurisdiction of France, and there sold them to the highest bidder.

The money thus obtained Wickes used in purchasing vessels suitable for armed cruisers. While these were fitting out, the "Lexington" and the "Dolphin" arrived in France, and soon joined the "Reprisal" in a cruise around the British Islands. The little squadron fairly swept the Channel and the Irish Sea of merchantmen. The excitement in England ran high, and the admiralty despatched all the available men-of-war in search of the marauders. But the swift-sailing cruisers escaped all pursuers. Once indeed the "Reprisal" came near falling into the hands of the enemy, but escaped by throwing overboard every thing movable, sawing away her bulwarks, and even cutting away her heavy timbers.

The result of this cruise so aroused England, that France no longer dared to harbor the audacious Yankee cruisers. The "Lexington" and "Reprisal" were, therefore, ordered to leave European waters forthwith. The "Lexington" complied first, and when one day out from the port of Morlaix encountered the British man-of-war cutter "Alert." The "Alert" was the smaller of the two vessels, but her commander had in him all that pluck and those sterling seamanlike qualities that made the name of England great upon the ocean. A stiff breeze was blowing, and a heavy cross sea running, when the two vessels came together. The gunners sighted their pieces at random and fired, knowing little whether the shot would go plunging into the waves, or fly high into the air. As a result, they carried on a spirited cannonade for upwards of two hours, with the sole effect of carrying away the top hamper of the "Alert," and exhausting most of the powder on the American craft.

Finding his ammunition rapidly giving out, the captain of the "Lexington" clapped on all sail, and soon showed his crippled antagonist a clean pair of heels. But so great was the activity of the crew of the "Alert," that they repaired the damage done aloft, and in four hours overtook the "American," and opened fire upon her. The battle now became one-sided; for the "Lexington," being short of powder, could make little resistance to the brisk attack of her

persevering adversary. In less than an hour she was forced to strike her flag.

The fate of the "Reprisal" was even harder than that of her consort. While crossing the Atlantic on her way back to the coast of America, she was overtaken by a furious gale. With furled sails and battened hatches, the little craft made a desperate fight for life. But the fierce wind carried away her masts and spars, and the tossing waves opened her seams, so that it became apparent to all on board that the fate of the gallant craft, that had so nobly defended the cause of American liberty, was sealed. As the water rose higher and higher in the hold, the officers saw that it was no longer a question of the possibility of saving the ship, but that their lives and those of the crew were in the greatest danger. Boats were lowered; but the angry white-capped waves tossed them madly aloft, and, turning them over and over, sent the poor fellows that manned them to their long account. All hands then set to work at the construction of a huge raft; and just as the ship's stern settled, it was pushed off, and all that could reach it clambered on. A few poor fellows clung to the sinking ship; and their comrades on the raft saw them crowd on the forecastle, and heard their despairing cries as the good ship threw her prow high in the air, and sunk stern foremost to the placid depths of the stormy ocean. But those on the raft were not destined to escape the fate of their comrades. The haggard sufferers were doomed to see the frail structure on which their lives depended go slowly to pieces before the mighty power of the remorseless sea. Bit by bit their foothold vanished from beneath them. One by one they were swept off into the seething cauldron of the storm. At last but one man remained, the cook of the ill-fated vessel, who floated about for three days on a piece of wreckage, until, half-starved and nearly crazed, he was picked up by a passing vessel, and told the tale of the wreck. So ended the career of the patriotic and gallant Capt. Wickes and his crew, and such is the fate that every stout fellow braves when he dons his blue jacket and goes to serve his country on the ocean.

PAGE 75.—BLUE JACKETS OF '76.

THE LOSS OF THE "REPRISAL."

In addition to the exploits of the American cruisers upon the high seas, certain operations of the British navy along the American coast, during the year 1776, demand attention. Of these the most important was the attack by Sir Peter Parker upon Charleston, in September of that year, — an attack made memorable by the determined courage of the Americans, the daring exploit of Sergt. Jasper, and the discovery of the remarkable qualities of palmetto logs as a material for fortifications.

Charleston was then a town of but a few thousand inhabitants; but, small as it was, it had become particularly obnoxious to the British on account of the strong revolutionary sentiment of its people, and their many open acts of defiance of King George's authority. When the offensive Stamp Act first was published, the people of Charleston rose in revolt; and the stamps for the city being stored in an armed fortress in the bay, known as Castle Johnson, a party of a hundred and fifty armed men went down the bay, surprised the garrison, captured the castle, and, loading its guns, defied the authorities. Not until the promise had been made that the stamps should be sent back to England, did the rebellious Carolinians lay down their arms. Nor was their peace of long duration. When the news of the battle of Lexington reached the little Southern seaport, the people straightway cast about for an opportunity to strike a blow against the tyranny of England. The opportunity soon offered itself. An English sloop laden with powder was lying at St. Augustine, Fla. Learning this, the people of Charleston fitted out a vessel, which captured the powder-ship, and, eluding a number of British cruisers, returned safely to Charleston with fifteen thousand pounds of gunpowder for the colonial army. Soon after the colonial troops took possession of the forts in the harbor, and Charleston became a revolutionary stronghold.

Therefore, when the war authorities of Great Britain prepared to take active, offensive measures against the seaport cities of the rebellious colonies, Charleston was one of the first points chosen for attack. It was on the 4th of June, 1776, that the British fleet, under the command of the veteran admiral, Sir Peter Parker, appeared off Charleston bar. The colonists had learned of its approach some time before; and the

town was crowded with troops, both regular and volunteer. Two forts, Johnson and Sullivan, were erected at points commanding the entrance to the harbor. Troops were thrown out to oppose the advance of landing parties. The wharves were covered with breastworks, and the streets leading up from the water-side were barricaded. There was a great scarceness of lead for bullets; and to supply that need the leaden sashes, in which window-panes were at that time set, were melted down. When the fleet of the enemy appeared in the offing, Charleston was quite ready to give the invaders a warm reception.

Fort Sullivan was the chief work in the harbor, and against this Parker began a vigorous cannonade early on the morning of the 28th of June. The fort had been built of logs of palmetto wood, and was looked upon with some distrust by its defenders, who did not know how well that material could withstand cannon-shot; but the opening volley of the fleet re-assured them. The balls penetrated deep in the soft, spongy wood without detaching any of the splinters, which, in a battle, are more dangerous than the shot themselves. The fort soon replied to the fire of the fleet; and the thunder of three hundred cannon rang out over the bay, while dense clouds of sulphurous smoke hid the scene from the eager gaze of the crowds of people on the housetops of the city.

When the stately ships of the British squadron swung into line before the little wooden fort, there was hardly a sailor who did not take his station without a feeling of contempt for the insignificant obstacle that they were about to sweep from their path. But as the day wore on, and the ceaseless cannonade seemed to have no effect on the bastions of the fort, the case began to look serious.

"Mind the commodore, and the fifty-gun ships," was the command Moultrie gave to the gunners in the fort when the action commenced, and right well did they heed the injunction. The quarter-decks of the ships-of-the-line were swept clean of officers. The gunners in the fort soon found that the fire of the enemy was doing little or no execution, and they sighted their guns as coolly as though out for a day's target practice. The huge iron balls crashed through the hulls of the ships, or

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IN THE PALMETTO FORT.

swept their decks, doing terrific execution. The cable of the "Bristol" was shot away, and she swung round with her stern to the fort. In this position she was raked repeatedly; her captain was killed, and at one time not an officer remained on her quarter-deck except the admiral Sir Peter Parker. When the conflict ceased, this ship alone contained forty killed and seventy-one wounded men. The other ships suffered nearly as severely. The twenty-eight-gun ship "Actæon" grounded during the course of the engagement; and when, after ten hours' fruitless cannonading, the British abandoned the task of reducing the fort, and determined to withdraw, she was found to be immovable. Accordingly Admiral Parker signalled to her officer to abandon the ship, and set her on fire. This was accordingly done; and the ship was left with her colors flying, and her guns loaded. This movement was observed by the Americans, who, in spite of the danger of an explosion, boarded the ship, fired her guns at the "Bristol," loaded three boats with stores, and pulled away, leaving the "Actæon" to blow up, which she did half an hour later.

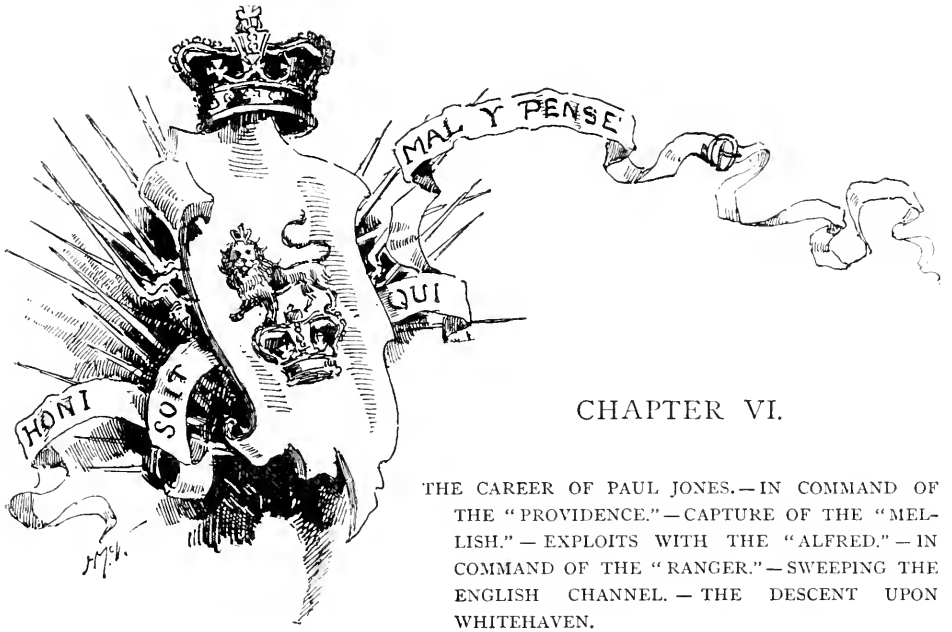
While the battle was at its hottest, and the shot and shell were flying thick over the fort, the flagstaff was shot away; and the flag of South Carolina, a blue ground, bearing a silver crescent, fell on the beach outside the parapet. Sergt. William Jasper, seeing this, leaped on the bastion, walked calmly through the storm of flying missiles, picked up the flag, and fastened it upon a sponge-staff. Then standing upon the highest point of the parapet, in full view of the ships and the men in the fort, he calmly fixed the staff upright, and returned to his place, leaving the flag proudly waving. The next day the governor of the colony visited the fort, and seeking out the brave sergeant, handed him a handsome sword and a lieutenant's commission. But Jasper proved to be as modest as he was brave; for he declined the proffered promotion, with the remark, —

"I am not fit to keep officers' company; I am but a sergeant."

The complete failure of the attack upon Charleston was a bitter pill for the English to swallow. They had brought against the raw, untrained

forces of the colony some of the finest ships of the boasted navy of Great Britain. They had fought well and pluckily. The fact that Sir Peter Parker was in command was in itself a guaranty that the attack would be a spirited one; and the tremendous loss of life in the fleet affords convincing proof that no poltroonery lurked among the British sailors. The loss of the British during the engagement, in killed and wounded, amounted to two hundred and twenty-five men. The Americans had ten men killed and twenty-two wounded. Moultrie, the commandant of the fort, says that after the battle was over they picked up more than twelve hundred solid shot of different sizes, and many thirteen-inch shells. Most of the shells that fell within the fort fell into a large pool of water, which extinguished their fuses, thus robbing them of their power for evil.

In his report of this battle, Admiral Parker fell into a queer error. He reports that a large party of men entering the fort met a man going out, whom they straightway hanged to a neighboring tree, in full view of the fleet. From this the admiral concluded that there was an incipient mutiny in the fort, and the ringleader was hanged as an example. Col. Moultrie, however, explained this by stating that the man hanging in the tree was simply the coat of a soldier, which had been carried away by a cannon-shot, and left hanging in the branches.



CHAPTER VI.

THE CAREER OF PAUL JONES. — IN COMMAND OF THE "PROVIDENCE." — CAPTURE OF THE "MELLISH." — EXPLOITS WITH THE "ALFRED." — IN COMMAND OF THE "RANGER." — SWEEPING THE ENGLISH CHANNEL. — THE DESCENT UPON WHITEHAVEN.

WE HAVE already spoken of the farcical affair between the fleet under Ezekiel Hopkins and the English frigate "Glasgow," in which the English vessel, by superior seamanship, and taking advantage of the blunders of the Americans, escaped capture. The primary result of this battle was to cause the dismissal from the service of Hopkins. But his dismissal led to the advancement of a young naval officer, whose name became one of the most glorious in American naval annals, and whose fame as a skilful seaman has not been tarnished by the hand of time.

At the time of the escape of the "Glasgow," there was serving upon the "Alfred" a young lieutenant, by name John Paul Jones. Jones was a Scotchman. His rightful name was John Paul; but for some reason, never fully understood, he had assumed the surname of Jones, and his record under the name of Paul Jones forms one of the most glorious chapters of American naval history. When given a lieutenant's commission in the colonial navy, Jones was twenty-nine years old. From the day when a lad of thirteen years he shipped for his first voyage, he had spent

his life on the ocean. He had served on peaceful merchantmen, and in the less peaceful, but at that time equally respectable, slave-trade. A small inheritance had enabled him to assume the station of a Virginia gentleman; and he had become warmly attached to American ideas and principles, and at the outbreak of the Revolution put his services at the command of Congress. He was first offered a captain's commission with the command of the "Providence," mounting twelve guns and carrying one hundred men. But with extraordinary modesty the young sailor declined, saying that he hardly felt himself fitted to discharge the duties of a first lieutenant. The lieutenant's commission, however, he accepted; and it was in this station that with his own hands he hoisted the first American flag to the masthead of the "Alfred."

The wretched fiasco which attended the attack of the American fleet upon the "Glasgow" was greatly deplored by Jones. However, he refrained from any criticism upon his superiors, and sincerely regretted the finding of the court of inquiry, by which the captain of the "Providence" was dismissed the service, and Lieut. Paul Jones recommended to fill the vacancy.

The duties which devolved upon Capt. Jones were manifold and arduous. The ocean was swarming with powerful British men-of-war, which in his little craft he must avoid, while keeping a sharp outlook for foemen with whom he was equally matched. More than once, from the masthead of the "Providence," the lookout could discover white sails of one or more vessels, any one of which, with a single broadside, could have sent the audacious Yankee to the bottom. But luckily the "Providence" was a fast sailer, and wonderfully obedient to her helm. To her good sailing qualities, and to his own admirable seamanship, Jones owed more than one fortunate escape. Once, when almost overtaken by a powerful man-of-war, he edged away until he brought his pursuer on his weather quarter; then, putting his helm up suddenly, he stood dead before the wind, thus doubling on his course, and running past his adversary within pistol-shot of her guns, but in a course directly opposite to that upon which she was standing. The heavy war-ship went plunging

ahead like a heavy hound eluded by the agile fox, and the Yankee proceeded safely on her course.

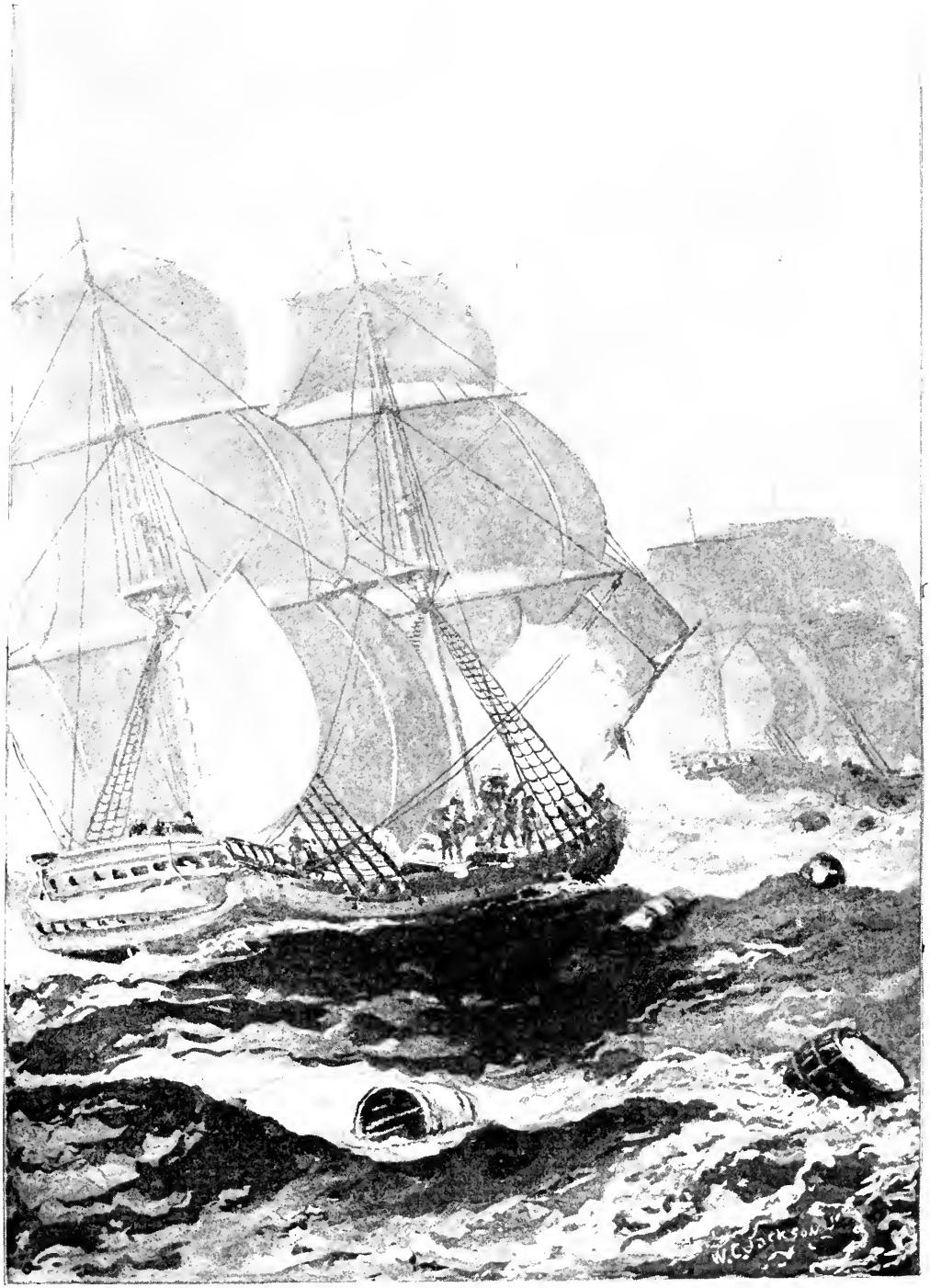
Some days later the "Providence" was lying to on the great banks near the Isle of Sables. It was a holiday for the crew; for no sails were in sight, and Capt. Jones had indulgently allowed them to get out their cod-lines and enjoy an afternoon's fishing. In the midst of their sport, as they were hauling in the finny monsters right merrily, the hail of the lookout warned them that a strange sail was in sight. The stranger drew rapidly nearer, and was soon made out to be a war-vessel. Jones, finding after a short trial that his light craft could easily outstrip the lumbering man-of-war, managed to keep just out of reach. Now and then the pursuer would luff up and let fly a broadside; the shot skipping along over the waves, but sinking before they reached the "Providence." Jones, who had an element of humor in his character, responded to this cannonade with one musket, which, with great solemnity, was discharged in response to each broadside. After keeping up this burlesque battle for some hours, the "Providence" spread her sails, and soon left her foe hull down beneath the horizon.

After having thus eluded his pursuer, Jones skirted the coast of Cape Breton, and put into the harbor of Canso, where he found three British fishing schooners lying at anchor. The inhabitants of the little fishing village were electrified to see the "Providence" cast anchor in the harbor, and, lowering her boats, send two crews of armed sailors to seize the British craft. No resistance was made, however; and the Americans burned one schooner, scuttled a second, and after filling the third with fish, taken from the other two, took her out of the harbor with the "Providence" leading the way.

From the crew of the captured vessel, Jones learned that at the Island of Madame, not far from Canso, there was a considerable flotilla of British merchantmen. Accordingly he proceeded thither with the intention of destroying them. On arriving, he found the harbor too shallow to admit the "Providence;" and accordingly taking up a position from which he could, with his cannon, command the harbor, he despatched

armed boats' crews to attack the shipping. On entering the harbor, the Americans found nine British vessels lying at anchor. Ships and brigs, as well as small fishing schooners, were in the fleet. It was a rich prize for the Americans, and it was won without bloodshed; for the peaceful fishermen offered no resistance to the Yankees, and looked upon the capture of their vessels with amazement. The condition of these poor men, thus left on a bleak coast with no means of escape, appealed strongly to Jones's humanity. He therefore told them, that, if they would assist him in making ready for sea such of the prizes as he wished to take with him, he would leave them vessels enough to carry them back to England. The fishermen heartily agreed to the proposition, and worked faithfully for several days at the task of fitting out the captured vessels. The night before the day on which Jones had intended leaving the harbor, the wind came on to blow, and a violent storm of wind and rain set in. Even the usually calm surface of the little harbor was lashed to fury by the shrieking wind. The schooner "Sea-Flower" — one of the captured prizes — was torn from her moorings; and though her crew got out the sweeps, and struggled valiantly for headway against the driving storm, she drifted on shore, and lay there a total wreck. The schooner "Ebenezer," which Jones had brought from Canso laden with fish, drifted on a sunken reef, and was there so battered by the roaring waves that she went to pieces. Her crew, after vainly striving to launch the boats, built a raft, and saved themselves on that.

The next day the storm abated; and Capt. Jones, taking with him three heavily laden prizes, left the harbor, and turned his ship's prow homeward. The voyage to Newport, then the headquarters of the little navy, was made without other incident than the futile chase of three British ships, which ran into the harbor of Louisbourg. On his arrival, Jones reported that he had been cruising for forty-seven days, and in that time had captured sixteen prizes, beside the fishing-vessels he burned at Cape Breton. Eight of his prizes he had manned, and sent into port; the remainder he had burned. It was the first effective blow the colonists had yet struck at their powerful foe upon the ocean.



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A STERN CHASE.

Hardly had Paul Jones completed this first cruise, when his mind, ever active in the service of his country, suggested to him a new enterprise in which he might contribute to the cause of American liberty. At this early period of the Revolution, the British were treating American prisoners with almost inconceivable barbarity. Many were sent to the "Old Jersey" prison-ship, of whose horrors we shall read something later on. Others, to the number of about a hundred, were taken to Cape Breton, and forced to labor like Russian felons in the underground coal-mines. Jones's plan was bold in its conception, but needed only energy and promptitude to make it perfectly feasible.

He besought the authorities to give him command of a squadron, that he might move on Cape Breton, destroy the British coal and fishing vessels always congregated there, and liberate the hapless Americans who were passing their lives in the dark misery of underground mining. His plan was received with favor, but the authorities lacked the means to give him the proper aid. However, two vessels, the "Alfred" and the "Providence," were assigned to him; and he went speedily to work to prepare for the adventure. At the outset, he was handicapped by lack of men. The privateers were then fitting out in every port; and seamen saw in privateering easier service, milder discipline, and greater profits than they could hope for in the regular navy. When, by hard work, the muster-roll of the "Alfred" showed her full complement of men shipped, the stormy month of November had arrived, and the golden hour for success was past.

Nevertheless, Jones, taking command of the "Alfred," and putting the "Providence" in the command of Capt. Hacker, left Newport, and laid his course to the northward. When he arrived off the entrance to the harbor of Louisbourg, he was so lucky as to encounter an English brig, the "Mellish," which, after a short resistance, struck her flag. She proved to be laden with heavy warm clothing for the British troops in Canada. This capture was a piece of great good fortune for the Americans, and many a poor fellow in Washington's army that winter had cause to bless Paul Jones for his activity and success.

The day succeeding the capture of the "Mellish" dawned gray and cheerless. Light flurries of snow swept across the waves, and by noon a heavy snowstorm, driven by a violent north-east gale, darkened the air, and lashed the waves into fury. Jones stood dauntless at his post on deck, encouraging the sailors by cheery words, and keeping the sturdy little vessel on her course. All day and night the storm roared; and when, the next morning, Jones, wearied by his ceaseless vigilance, looked anxiously across the waters for his consort, she was not to be seen. The people on the "Alfred" supposed, of course, that the "Providence" was lost, with all on board, and mourned the sad fate of their comrades. But, in fact, Capt. Hacker, affrighted by the storm, had basely deserted his leader during the night, and made off for Newport, leaving Jones to prosecute his enterprise alone.

Jones recognized in this desertion the knell of the enterprise upon which he had embarked. Nevertheless, he disdained to return to port: so sending the "Mellish" and a second prize, which the British afterwards recaptured, back to Massachusetts, he continued his cruise along the Nova Scotia coast. Again he sought out the harbor of Canso, and, entering it, found a large English transport laden with provisions aground just inside the bar. Boats' crews from the "Alfred" soon set the torch to the stranded ship, and then, landing, fired a huge warehouse filled with whale-oil and the products of the fisheries. Leaving the blazing pile behind, the "Alfred" put out again into the stormy sea, and made for the northward.

As he approached Louisbourg, Jones fell in with a considerable fleet of British coal-vessels, in convoy of the frigate "Flora." A heavy fog hung over the ocean; and the fleet Yankee, flying here and there, was able to cut out and capture three of the vessels without alarming the frigate, that continued unsuspectingly on her course. Two days later, Jones snapped up a Liverpool privateer, that fired scarcely a single gun in resistance. Then crowded with prisoners, embarrassed by prizes, and short of food and water, the "Alfred turned her course homeward.

Five valuable prizes sailed in her wake. Anxiety for the safety of

these gave Jones no rest by day or night. He was ceaselessly on the watch lest some hostile man-of-war should overhaul his fleet, and force him to abandon his hard-won fruits of victory. All went well until, when off St. George's Bank, he encountered the frigate "Milford," — the same craft to whose cannon-balls Jones, but a few months before, had tauntingly responded with musket-shots.

It was late in the afternoon when the "Milford" was sighted; and Jones, seeing that she could by no possibility overtake his squadron before night, ordered his prizes to continue their course without regard to any lights or apparent signals from the "Alfred." When darkness fell upon the sea, the Yankees were scudding along on the starboard tack, with the Englishman coming bravely up astern. From the tops of the "Alfred" swung two burning lanterns, which the enemy doubtless pronounced a bit of beastly stupidity on the part of the Yankee, affording, as it did, an excellent guide for the pursuer to steer by. But during the night the wily Jones changed his course. The prizes, with the exception of the captured privateer, continued on the starboard tack. The "Alfred" and the privateer made off on the port tack, with the "Milford" in full cry in their wake. Not until the morning dawned did the Englishman discover how he had been tricked.

Having thus secured the safety of his prizes, it only remained for Jones to escape with the privateer. Unluckily, however, the officer put in charge of the privateer proved incapable, and his craft fell into hands of the British. Jones, however, safely carried the "Alfred" clear of the "Milford's" guns, and, a heavy storm coming up, soon eluded his foe in the snow and darkness. Thereupon he shaped his course for Boston, where he arrived on the 5th of December, 1776. Had he been delayed two days longer, both his provisions and his water would have been exhausted.

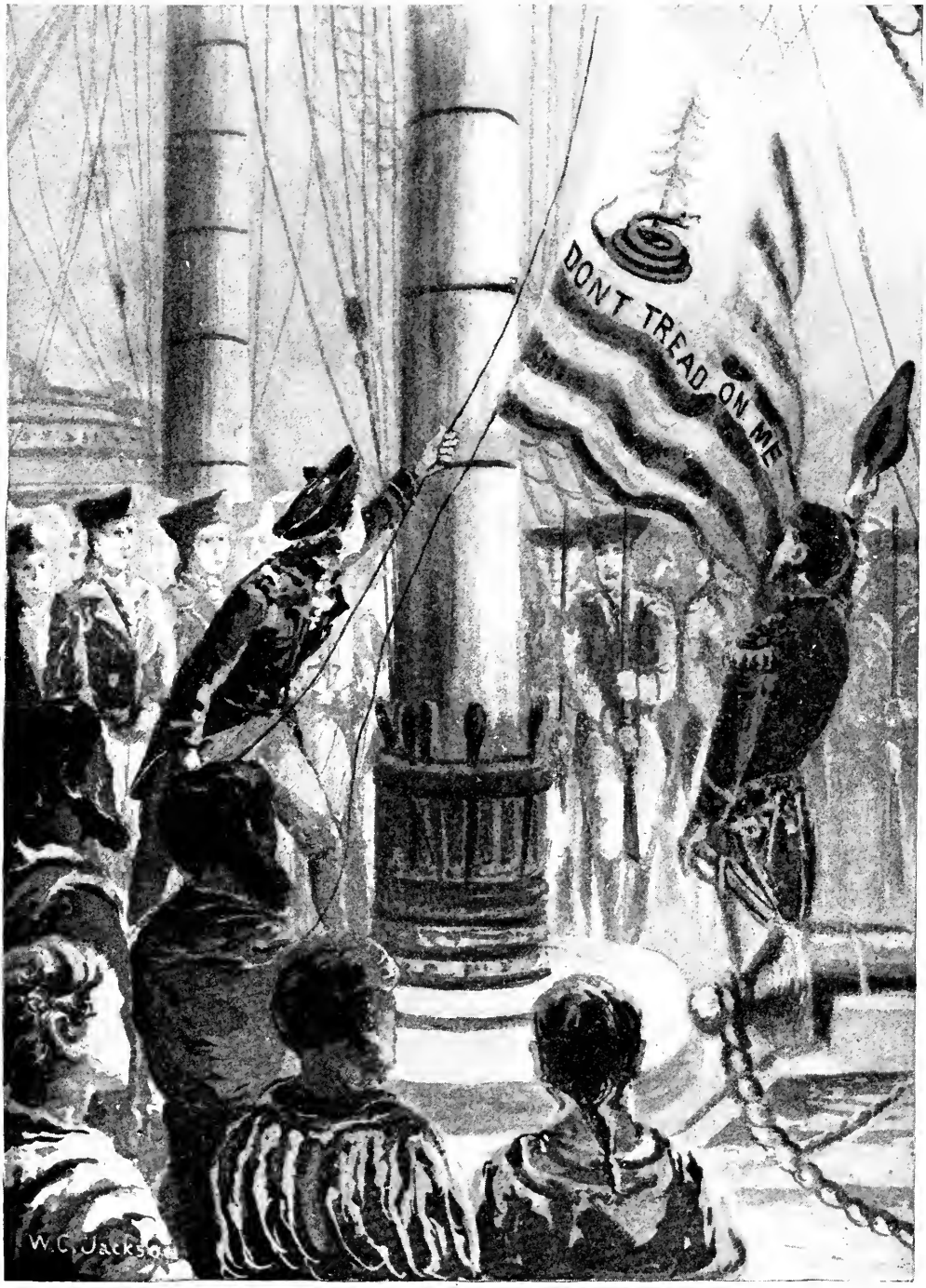
For the ensuing six months Jones remained on shore, not by any means inactive, for his brain was teeming with great projects for his country's service. He had been deprived of the command of the "Alfred," and another ship was not easily to be found: so he turned his attention to

questions of naval organization, and the results of many of his suggestions are observable in the United States navy to-day. It was not until June 14, 1777, that a command was found for him. This was the eighteen-gun ship "Ranger," built to carry a frigate's battery of twenty-six guns. She had been built for the revolutionary government, at Portsmouth, and was a stanch-built, solid craft, though miserably slow and somewhat crank. Jones, though disappointed with the sailing qualities of the craft, was nevertheless vastly delighted to be again in command of a man-of-war, and wasted no time in getting her ready for sea.

It so happened, that, on the very day Paul Jones received his commission as commander of the "Ranger," the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes for the national flag. Jones, anticipating this action, had prepared a flag in accordance with the proposed designs, and, upon hearing of the action of Congress, had it run to the masthead, while the cannon of the "Ranger" thundered out their deep-mouthed greetings to the starry banner destined to wave over the most glorious nation of the earth. Thus it happened that the same hand that had given the pine-tree banner to the winds was the first to fling out to the breezes the bright folds of the Stars and Stripes.

Early in October the "Ranger" left Portsmouth, and made for the coast of France. Astute agents of the Americans in that country were having a fleet, powerful frigate built there for Jones, which he was to take, leaving the sluggish "Ranger" to be sold. But, on his arrival at Nantes, Jones was grievously disappointed to learn that the British Government had so vigorously protested against the building of a vessel-of-war in France for the Americans, that the French Government had been obliged to notify the American agents that their plan must be abandoned. France was at this time at peace with Great Britain, and, though inclined to be friendly with the rebellious colonies, was not ready to entirely abandon her position as a neutral power. Later, when she took up arms against England, she gave the Americans every right in her ports they could desire.

Jones thus found himself in European waters with a vessel too weak to



PAGE 93.—BLUE JACKETS OF '76.

LT. JONES HOISTING THE FIRST AMERICAN FLAG.

stand against the frigates England could send to take her, and too slow to elude them. But he determined to strike some effective blows for the cause of liberty. Accordingly he planned an enterprise, which, for audacity of conception and dash in execution, has never been equalled by any naval expedition since.

This was nothing less than a virtual invasion of England. The "Ranger" lay at Brest. Jones planned to dash across the English Channel, and cruise along the coast of England, burning shipping and towns, as a piece of retaliation upon the British for their wanton outrages along the American coast. It was a bold plan. The channel was thronged with the heavy frigates of Great Britain, any one of which could have annihilated the audacious Yankee cruiser. Nevertheless, Jones determined to brave the danger.

At the outset, it seemed as though his purpose was to be balked by heavy weather. For days after the "Ranger" left Brest, she battled against the chop-seas of the English Channel. The sky was dark, and the light of the sun obscured by gray clouds. The wind whistled through the rigging, and tore at the tightly furled sails. Great green walls of water, capped with snowy foam, beat thunderously against the sides of the "Ranger." Now and then a port would be driven in, and the men between decks drenched by the incoming deluge. The "Ranger" had encountered an equinoctial gale in its worst form.

When the gale died away, Jones found himself off the Scilly Islands, in full view of the coast of England. Here he encountered a merchantman, which he took and scuttled, sending the crew ashore to spread the news that an American man-of-war was ravaging the channel. Having alarmed all England, he changed his hunting-ground to St. George's Channel and the Irish Sea, where he captured several ships; sending one, a prize, back to Brest. He was in waters with which he had been familiar from his youth, and he made good use of his knowledge; dashing here and there, lying in wait in the highway of commerce, and then secreting himself in some sequestered cove while the enemy's ship-of-war went by in fruitless search for the marauder. All England was aroused

by the exploits of the Yankee cruiser. Never since the days of the Invincible Armada had war been so brought home to the people of the tight little island. Long had the British boastfully claimed the title of monarch of the seas. Long had they sung the vainglorious song, —

> "Britannia needs no bulwarks,
> No towers along the steep;
> Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
> Her home is on the deep."

But Paul Jones showed Great Britain that her boasted power was a bubble. He ravaged the seas within cannon-shot of English headlands. He captured and burned merchantmen, drove the rates of insurance up to panic prices, paralyzed British shipping-trade, and even made small incursions into British territory.

The reports that reached Jones of British barbarity along the American coast, of the burning of Falmouth, of tribute levied on innumerable seaport towns, — all aroused in him a determination to strike a retaliatory blow. Whitehaven, a small seaport, was the spot chosen by him for attack; and he brought his ship to off the mouth of the harbor late one night, intending to send in a boat's crew to fire the shipping. But so strong a wind sprung up, as to threaten to drive the ship ashore; and Jones was forced to make sail, and get an offing. A second attempt, made upon a small harbor called Lochryan, on the western coast of Scotland, was defeated by a like cause.

But the expedition against Lochryan, though in itself futile, was the means of giving Jones an opportunity to show his merits as a fighter. Soon after leaving Lochryan, he entered the bay of Carrichfergus, on which is situated the Irish commercial city of Belfast. The bay was constantly filled with merchantmen; and the "Ranger," with her ports closed, and her warlike character carefully disguised, excited no suspicion aboard a trim, heavy-built craft that lay at anchor a little farther up the bay. This craft was the British man-of-war "Drake," mounting twenty guns. Soon after his arrival in the bay, Jones learned the char-

acter of the "Drake," and determined to attempt her capture during the night. Accordingly he dropped anchor near by, and, while carefully concealing the character of his craft, made every preparation for a midnight fight. The men sat between decks, sharpening cutlasses, and cleaning and priming their pistols; the cannon were loaded with grape, and depressed for work at close quarters; battle lanterns were hung in place, ready to be lighted at the signal for action.

At ten o'clock, the tramp of men about the capstan gave notice that the anchor was being brought to the catheads. Soon the creaking of cordage, and the snapping of the sails, told that the fresh breeze was being caught by the spreading sails. Then the waves rippled about the bow of the ship, and the "Ranger" was fairly under way.

It was a pitch-dark night, but the lights on board the "Drake" showed where she was lying. On the "Ranger" all lights were extinguished, and no noise told of her progress towards her enemy. It was the captain's plan to run his vessel across the "Drake's" cable, drop his own anchor, let the "Ranger" swing alongside the Englishman, and then fight it out at close quarters. But this plan, though well laid, failed of execution. The anchor was not let fall in season; and the "Ranger," instead of bringing up alongside her enemy, came to anchor half a cable-length astern. The swift-flowing tide and the fresh breeze made it impossible to warp the ship alongside: so Jones ordered the cable cut, and the "Ranger" scudded down the bay before the ever-freshening gale. It does not appear that the people on the "Drake" were aware of the danger they so narrowly escaped.

The wind that had aided the tide in defeating Jones's enterprise blew stronger and stronger, and before morning the sea was tossing before a regular north-east gale. Against it the "Ranger" could make no headway: so Jones gave his ship her head, and scudded before the wind until within the vicinity of Whitehaven, when he determined to again attempt to destroy the shipping in that port. This time he was successful. Bringing the "Ranger" to anchor near the bar, Capt. Jones called for volunteers to accompany him on the expedition.

He himself was to be their leader; for as a boy he had often sailed in and out of the little harbor, knew where the forts stood, and where the colliers anchored most thickly. The landing party was divided into two boat-loads; Jones taking command of one, while Lieut. Wallingford held the tiller of the other boat. With muffled oars the Americans made for the shore, the boats' keels grated upon the pebbly shore, and an instant later the adventurers had scaled the ramparts of the forts, and had made themselves masters of the garrisons. All was done quietly. The guns in the fortifications were spiked; and, leaving the few soldiers on guard gagged and bound, Jones and his followers hastened down to the wharves to set fire to the shipping.

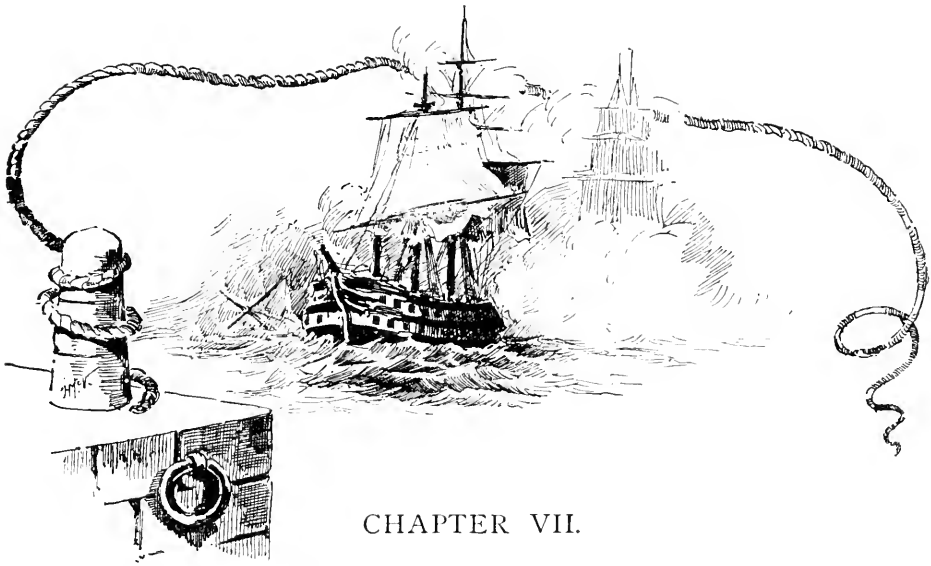
In the harbor were not less than two hundred and twenty vessels, large and small. On the north side of the harbor, near the forts, were about one hundred and fifty vessels. These Jones undertook to destroy. The others were left to Lieut. Wallingford, with his boat's crew of fifteen picked men.

When Jones and his followers reached the cluster of merchantmen, they found their torches so far burned out as to be useless. Failure stared them in the face then, when success was almost within their grasp. Jones, however, was not to be balked of his prey. Running his boat ashore, he hastened to a neighboring house, where he demanded candles. With these he returned, led his men aboard a large ship from which the crew fled, and deliberately built a fire in her hold. Lest the fire should go out, he found a barrel of tar, and threw it upon the flames. Then with the great ship roaring and crackling, and surrounded by scores of other vessels in danger from the flames, Jones withdrew, thinking his work complete.

Many writers have criticised Paul Jones for not having stayed longer to complete the destruction of the vessels in the harbor. But, with the gradually brightening day, his position, which was at the best very dangerous, was becoming desperate. There were one hundred and fifty vessels in that part of the harbor; the crews averaged ten men to a vessel: so that nearly fifteen hundred men

were opposed to the plucky little band of Americans. The roar of the fire aroused the people of the town, and they rushed in crowds to the wharf. In describing the affair Jones writes, "The inhabitants began to appear in thousands, and individuals ran hastily toward us. I stood between them and the ship on fire, with my pistol in my hand, and ordered them to stand, which they did with some precipitation. The sun was a full hour's march above the horizon; and, as sleep no longer ruled the world, it was time to retire. We re-embarked without opposition, having released a number of prisoners, as our boats could not carry them. After all my people had embarked, I stood upon the pier for a considerable space, yet no person advanced. I saw all the eminences round the town covered with the amazed inhabitants."

As his boat drew away from the blazing shipping, Jones looked anxiously across the harbor to the spot to which Lieut. Wallingford had been despatched. But no flames were seen in that quarter; for, Wallingford's torches having gone out, he had abandoned the enterprise. And so the Americans, having regained their ship, took their departure, leaving only one of the enemy's vessels burning. A most lame and impotent conclusion it was indeed; but, as Jones said, "What was done is sufficient to show that not all the boasted British navy is sufficient to protect their own coasts, and that the scenes of distress which they have occasioned in America may soon be brought home to their own doors."



CHAPTER VII.

CAREER OF PAUL JONES CONTINUED. — HIS DESCENT UPON THE CASTLE OF LORD SELKIRK. — THE AFFAIR OF THE PLATE. — THE DESCENT UPON WHITEHAVEN. — THE BATTLE WITH THE "DRAKE." — LIEUT. SIMPSON'S PERFIDY.

WE NOW come to the glorious part of the career of Paul Jones upon the ocean. Heretofore he has been chiefly occupied in the capture of defenceless merchantmen. His work has been that of the privateer, even if not of the pirate that the British have always claimed he was. But the time came when Jones proved that he was ready to fight an adversary of his mettle ; was willing to take heavy blows, and deal stunning ones in return. His daring was not confined to dashing expeditions in which the danger was chiefly overcome by spirit and rapid movements. While this class of operations was ever a favorite with the doughty seaman, he was not at all averse to the deadly naval duel.

We shall for a time abandon our account of the general naval incidents of the Revolution, to follow the career of Paul Jones to the end of the war. His career is not only the most interesting, but the most important, feature of the naval operations of that war. He stands out alone, a grand figure in naval history, as does Decatur in the wars with the Barbary pirates, or Farragut in the war for the Union. The war of 1812

affords no such example of single greatness in the navy. There we find Perry, McDonough, and Porter, all equally great. But in '76 there was no one to stand beside Paul Jones.

When the "Ranger" left the harbor of Whitehaven, her captain was heavy hearted. He felt that he had had the opportunity to strike a heavy blow at the British shipping, but had nevertheless inflicted only a trifling hurt. Angry with himself for not having better planned the adventure, and discontented with his lieutenant for not having by presence of mind prevented the fiasco, he felt that peace of mind could only be obtained by some deed of successful daring.

He was cruising in seas familiar to him as a sailor. Along the Scottish shores his boyhood hours had been spent. This knowledge he sought to turn to account. From the deck of his ship, he could see the wooded shores of St. Mary's Island, on which were the landed estates of Lord Selkirk, a British noble of ancient lineage and political prominence. On the estate of this nobleman Paul Jones was born, and there he passed the few years of his life that elapsed before he forsook the land for his favorite element.

Leaning against the rail on the quarter-deck of the "Ranger," Jones could see through his spy-glass the turrets and spires of Lord Selkirk's castle. As he gazed, there occurred to him the idea, that if he could send a landing party ashore, seize the castle, capture the peer, and bear him off into captivity, he would not only strike terror into the hearts of the British, but would give the Americans a prisoner who would serve as a hostage to secure good treatment for the hapless Americans who had fallen into the hands of the enemy.

With Jones, the conception of a plan was followed by its swift execution. Disdaining to wait for nightfall, he chose two boats' crews of tried and trusty men, and landed. The party started up the broad and open highway leading to the castle. They had gone but a few rods, however, when they encountered two countrymen, who stared a moment at the force of armed men, and then turned in fear to escape.

"Halt!" rang out the clear voice of the leader of the blue-jackets;

and the peasants fell upon their faces in abject terror. Jones directed that they be brought to him; and he questioned them kindly, setting their minds at rest, and learning from them much of the castle and its inmates. Lord Selkirk was away from home. This to Jones was bitter news. It seemed as though some evil genius was dogging his footsteps, bringing failure upon his most carefully planned enterprises. But he was not a man to repine over the inevitable, and he promptly ordered his men to the right about, and made for the landing-place again.

But the sailors were not so unselfish in their motives as their captain. They had come ashore expecting to plunder the castle of the earl, and they now murmured loudly over the abandonment of the adventure. They saw the way clear before them. No guards protected the house. The massive ancestral plate, with which all English landed families are well provided, was unprotected by bolts or bars. They felt that, in retreating, they were throwing away a chance to despoil their enemy, and enrich themselves.

Jones felt the justice of the complaint of the sailors; but only after a fierce struggle with his personal scruples could he yield the point. The grounds of the Earl of Selkirk had been his early playground. A lodge on the vast estate had been his childhood's home. Lady Selkirk had shown his family many kindnesses. To now come to her house as a robber and pillager, seemed the blackest ingratitude; but, on the other hand, he had no right to permit his personal feelings to interfere with his duty to the crew. The sailors had followed him into danger many a time, and this was their first opportunity for financial reward. And, even if it was fair to deny them this chance to make a little prize-money, it would hardly be safe to sow the seeds of discontent among the crew while on a cruise in waters infested with the enemy's ships. With a sigh Jones abandoned his intention of protecting the property of Lady Selkirk, and ordered his lieutenant to proceed to the castle, and capture the family plate. Jones himself returned to the ship, resolved to purchase the spoils at open sale, and return them to their former owner.

The blue-jackets continued their way up the highway, and, turning

aside where a heavy gate opened into a stately grove, demanded of an old man who came, wondering, out of the lodge, that he give them instant admittance. Then, swinging into a trot, they ran along the winding carriage-drive until they came out on the broad lawn that extended in front of the castle. Here for the first time they were seen by the inmates of the castle; and faint screams of fear, and shouts of astonishment, came from the open windows of the stately pile. The men-servants came rushing out to discover who the lawless crowd that so violated the sanctity of an English earl's private park could be; but their curiosity soon abated when a few stout blue-jackets, cutlass and pistol in hand, surrounded them, and bade them keep quiet. The lieutenant, with two stout seamen at his back, then entered the castle, and sought out the mistress, who received him with calm courtesy, with a trace of scorn, but with no sign of fear.

Briefly the lieutenant told his errand. The countess gave an order to a butler, and soon a line of stout footmen entered, bearing the plate. Heavy salvers engraved with the family arms of Lord Selkirk, quaint drinking-cups and flagons curiously carved, ewers, goblets, platters, covers, dishes, teapots, and all kinds of table utensils were there, all of exquisitely artistic workmanship, and bearing the stamp of antiquity. When all was ready, the lieutenant called in two of the sailors from the lawn; and soon the whole party, bearing the captured treasure, disappeared in the curves of the road.

This incident, simple enough in reality, the novelist Fenimore Cooper has made the germ of one of his exquisite sea-tales, "The Pilot." British historians have made of it an example by which to prove the lawlessness and base ingratitude of Paul Jones. As may readily be imagined, it stirred up at the time the most intense excitement in England. Jones became the bugbear of timid people. His name was used to frighten little children. He was called pirate, traitor, free-booter, plunderer. It was indeed a most audacious act that he had committed. Never before or since had the soil of England been trodden by a hostile foot. Never had a British peer been forced to feel that his own castle was not safe from the

invader. Jones, with his handful of American tars, had accomplished a feat which had never before been accomplished, and which no later foeman of England has dared to repeat. It is little wonder that the British papers described him as a bloodthirsty desperado.

A few weeks later, the captured plate was put up for sale by the prize agents. Capt. Jones, though not a rich man, bought it, and returned it to the countess. Lord Selkirk, in acknowledging its receipt, wrote, —

"And on all occasions, both now and formerly, I have done you the justice to tell that you made an offer of returning the plate very soon after your return to Brest; and although you yourself were not at my house, but remained at the shore with your boat, that you had your officers and men in such extraordinary good discipline, that your having given them the strictest orders to behave well, — to do no injury of any kind, to make no search, but only to bring off what plate was given them, — that in reality they did exactly as was ordered; and that not one man offered to stir from his post on the outside of the house, nor entered the doors, nor said an uncivil word; that the two officers stayed not one-quarter of an hour in the parlor and in the butler's pantry while the butler got the plate together, behaved politely, and asked for nothing but the plate, and instantly marched their men off in regular order; and that both officers and men behaved in all respects so well, that it would have done credit to the best-disciplined troops whatever."

But the British took little notice of the generous reparation made by Capt. Jones, and continued to hurl abuse and hard names at him.

Jones was vastly disappointed at his failure to capture the person of Lord Selkirk. The story of the sufferings of his countrymen in British prisons worked upon his heart, and he longed to take captive a personage whom he could hold as hostage. But, soon after leaving St. Mary's Isle, he fell in again with the British man-of-war "Drake;" and as a result of this encounter he had prisoners enough to exchange for many hapless Americans languishing in hulks and prisons.

After the wind and tide had defeated the midnight attempt made by Jones to capture the "Drake," that craft had remained quietly at her

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BATTLE BETWEEN THE "RANGER" AND THE "DRAKE."

anchorage, little suspecting that the bay of Carrickfergus had held so dangerous a neighbor. But soon reports of the "Ranger's" depredations began to reach the ears of the British captain. The news of the desperate raid upon Whitehaven became known to him. He therefore determined to leave his snug anchorage, and go in search of the audacious Yankee. Just as the captain of the "Drake" had reached this determination, and while he was making sail, the "Ranger" appeared off the mouth of the harbor.

The "Drake" promptly sent out a boat to examine the strange craft, and report upon her character. Jones saw her coming, and resolved to throw her off the scent. Accordingly, by skilful seamanship, he kept the stern of the "Ranger" continually presented to the prying eyes in the British boat. Turn which way they might, be as swift in their manœuvres as they might, the British scouts could see nothing of the "Ranger" but her stern, pierced with two cabin windows, as might be the stern of any merchantman. Her sides, dotted with frowning ports, were kept securely hidden from their eyes.

Though provided with spy-glasses, the people in the boat were totally deceived. Unsuspectingly they came up under the stern of the "Ranger," and demanded to come on board. As the officer in command clambered up a rope, and vaulted the taffrail to the quarter-deck, he saw Paul Jones and his lieutenants, in full uniform, standing before him.

"Why, — why, what ship's this?" stammered the astonished officer.

"This is the American Continental ship 'Ranger,' and you are my prisoner," responded Jones; and at the words a few sailors, with cutlasses and pistols, called to the men in the boat alongside, to come aboard and give themselves up.

From his captives Jones learned that the news of the Whitehaven raid had reached the "Drake" only the night before; and that she had been re-enforcing her crew with volunteers, preparatory to going out in search of the "Ranger." As he stood talking to the captured British naval officer, Jones noticed slender columns of smoke rising from the woods on neighboring highlands, where he knew there were no houses.

"What does that mean?" he asked.

"Alarm fires, sir," answered the captive; "the news of your descent upon Whitehaven is terrifying the whole country."

Soon, however, the attention of the Americans was diverted from the signal-fires to the "Drake." An appearance of life and bustle was observable about the boat. The shrill notes of the boatswain's whistle, and the tramp of men about the capstan, came faintly over the waters. The rigging was full of sailors, and the sails were being quickly spread to catch the fresh breeze. Soon the ship began to move slowly from her anchorage; she heeled a little to one side, and, responsive to her helm, turned down the bay. She was coming out to look after her lost boat.

Jones determined to hold his ground, and give battle to the Englishman. He at once began to prepare for battle in every way possible without alarming the enemy. The great guns were loaded and primed. Cutlasses and pistols were brought up from the armorer's room, and placed in convenient locations on the main deck, so that the boarders might find them when needed. The powder-monkeys, stripped for action, and the handlers and cartridge-makers entered the powder-magazine, and prepared to hand out the deadly explosive. The cook and his assistant strewed sawdust and ashes about the decks, to catch the blood, and keep the men from slipping. Every one was busy, from the captain down to the galley-boy.

There was plenty of time to prepare; for the tide was out, and the "Drake," beating down a narrow channel, made but slow headway. The delay was a severe strain upon the nerves of the men, who stood silent and grim at their quarters on the American ship, waiting for the fight to begin. At such a moment, even the most courageous must lose heart, as he thinks upon the terrible ordeal through which he must pass. Visions of home and loved ones flit before his misty eyes; and Jack chokes down a sob as he hides his emotion in nervously fingering the lock of his gun, or taking a squint through the port-holes at the approaching enemy.

At length the "Drake" emerged from the narrow channel of the

harbor, and coming within hailing distance of the "Ranger," ran up the flag of England, and hailed, —

"What ship is that?"

Paul Jones, himself standing on the taffrail, made answer, —

"This is the American Continental ship 'Ranger.' We are waiting for you. The sun is but little more than an hour from setting. It is therefore time to begin."

The "Drake" lay with her bow towards the "Ranger," and a little astern. As Jones finished speaking, he turned to the man at the wheel, and said, "Put your helm up. Up, I say!"

Quickly responsive to her helm, the vessel swung round; and, as her broadside came to bear, she let fly a full broadside of solid shot into the crowded decks and hull of the "Drake." Through timbers and planks, flesh and bone, the iron hail rushed, leaving death, wounds, and destruction in its path. The volunteers that the "Drake" had added to her crew so crowded the decks, that the execution was fearful. It seemed as though every shot found a human mark.

But the British were not slow to return the fire, and the roar of their broadside was heard before the thunder of the American fire had ceased to reverberate among the hills along the shore.

Then followed a desperate naval duel. The tide of victory flowed now this way, and now that. Jones kept his ship at close quarters with the enemy, and stood on the quarter-deck urging on his gunners, now pointing out some vulnerable spot, now applauding a good shot, at one time cheering, and at another swearing, watching every movement of his foe, and giving quick but wise orders to his helmsman, his whole mind concentrated upon the course of battle, and with never a thought for his own safety.

For more than an hour the battle raged, but the superior gunnery of the Americans soon began to tell. The "Drake" fought under no colors, her ensign having been shot away early in the action. But the spirited manner in which her guns were worked gave assurance that she had not struck. The American fire had wrought great execution on the deck

of the Englishman. Her captain was desperately wounded early in the fight; and the first lieutenant, who took his place, was struck down by a musket-ball from the "Ranger's" tops. The cock-pit of the "Drake" was like a butcher's shambles, so bespattered was it with blood. But on the "Ranger" there was little execution. The brave Wallingford, Jones's first lieutenant and right-hand man, was killed early in the action, and one poor fellow accompanied him to his long account; but beyond this there were no deaths. Six men only were wounded.

The sun was just dipping the lower edge of its great red circle beneath the watery horizon, when the "Drake" began to show signs of failing. First her fire slackened. A few guns would go off at a time, followed by a long silence. That portion of her masts which was visible above the clouds of gunpowder-smoke showed plainly the results of American gunnery. The sails were shot to ribbons. The cordage cut by the flying shot hung loosely down, or was blown out by the breeze. The spars were shattered, and hung out of place. The mainmast canted to leeward, and was in imminent danger of falling. The jib had been shot away entirely, and was trailing in the water alongside the ship.

Gradually the fire of the "Drake" slackened, until at last it had ceased altogether. Noticing this, Capt. Jones gave orders to cease firing; and soon silence reigned over the bay that had for an hour resounded with the thunder of cannon. As the smoke that enveloped the two ships cleared away, the people on the "Ranger" could see an officer standing on the rail of the "Drake" waving a white flag. At the sight a mighty huzza went up from the gallant lads on the Yankee ship, which was, however, quickly checked by Jones.

"Have you struck your flag?" he shouted through a speaking-trumpet.

"We have, sir," was the response.

"Then lay by until I send a boat aboard," directed Capt. Jones; and soon after a cutter put off from the side of the "Ranger," and made for the captured ship.

The boarding-officer clambered over the bulwarks of the "Drake," and, veteran naval officer as he was, started in amazement at the scene

of bloodshed before him. He had left a ship on which were two dead and six wounded men. He had come to a ship on which were forty men either dead or seriously wounded. Two dismounted cannon lay across the deck, one resting on the shattered and bleeding fragments of a man torn to pieces by a heavy shot. The deck was slippery with blood. The cock-pit was not large enough to hold all the wounded; and many sufferers lay on the deck crying piteously for aid, and surrounded by the mangled bodies of their dead comrades. The body of the captain, who had died of his wound, lay on the deserted quarter-deck.

Hastily the American officer noted the condition of the prize, and returned to his own ship for aid. All the boats of the "Ranger" were then lowered, and in the growing darkness the work of taking possession of the prize began. Most of the prisoners were transferred to the "Ranger." The dead were thrown overboard without burial service or ceremony of any kind, such is the grim earnestness of war. Such of the wounded as could not be taken care of in the sick-bay of the "Drake" were transferred to the "Ranger." The decks were scrubbed, holystoned, and sprinkled with hot vinegar to take away the smell of the blood-soaked planks. Cordage was spliced, sails mended, shot-holes plugged up; and, by the time morning came, the two ships were sufficiently repaired to be ready to leave the bay.

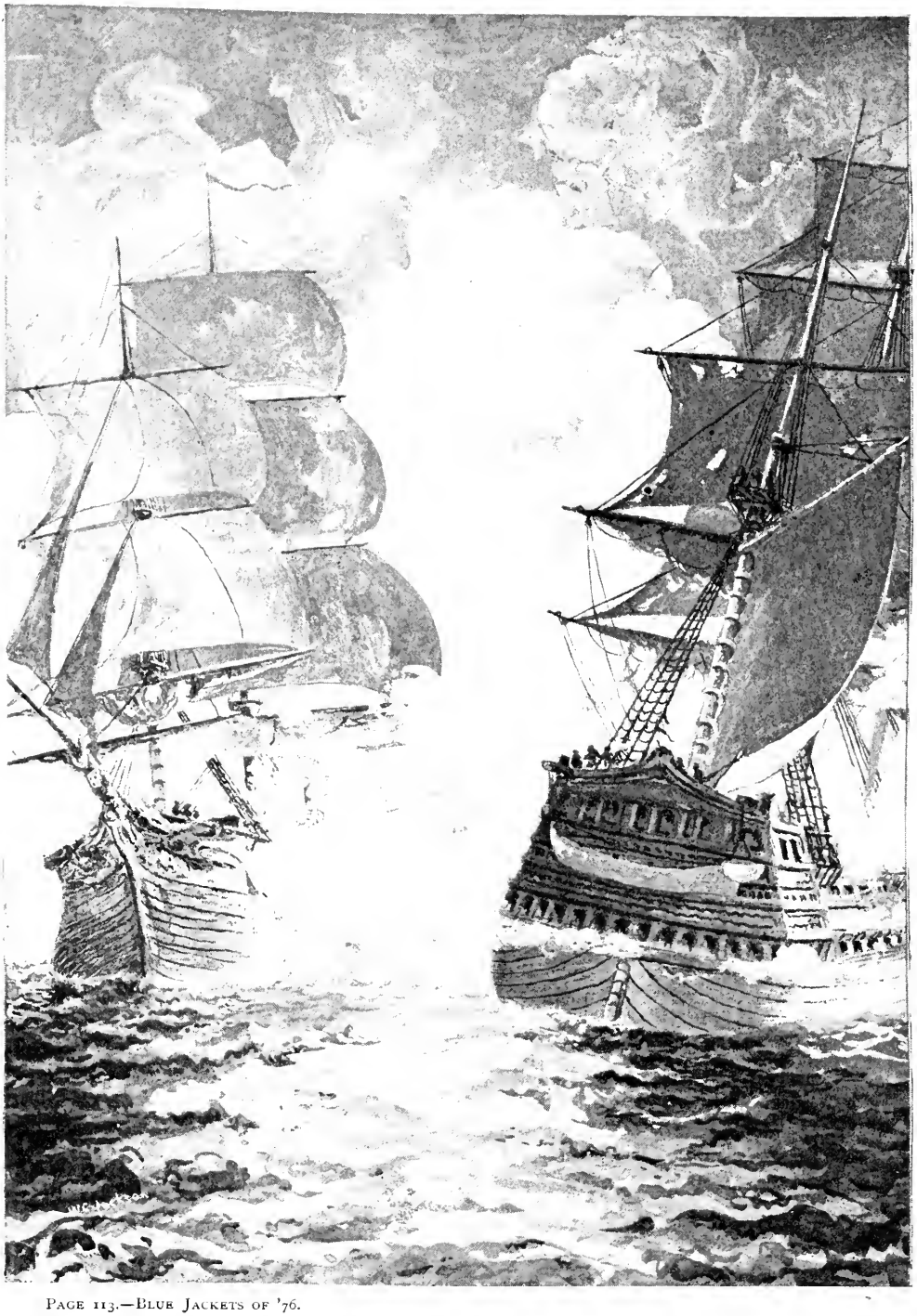
But, before leaving, Capt. Jones set at liberty two fishermen, whom he had captured several days before, and held prisoners lest they should spread the news of his presence in those parts. While the fishermen had been taken on board the "Ranger," and treated with the utmost kindness, their boat had been made fast alongside. Unluckily, however, the stormy weather had torn the boat from its fastenings; and it foundered before the eyes of its luckless owners, who bitterly bewailed their hard fate as they saw their craft disappear. But, when they came to leave the "Ranger," their sorrow was turned to joy; for Jones gave them money enough to buy for them a new boat and outfit, — a bit of liberality very characteristic of the man.

When the "Drake" was in condition to sail, Jones put her in command

of Lieut. Simpson, and the two vessels left the bay. This choice of commander proved to be an unfortunate one. Simpson was in many ways a most eccentric officer. He was a violent advocate of equal rights of all men, and even went so far as to disbelieve in the discipline without which no efficiency can be obtained on ship-board. He was an eighteenth-century Sir Joseph Porter. He believed that all questions of importance on ship-board should be settled by a vote of the crew; that the captain was, in a certain sense, only perpetual chairman of a meeting, and should only execute the will of the sailors. Naturally, this view of an officer's authority was little relished by Lieut. Simpson's brother officers, and he had for some time been greatly dissatisfied with his position.

When it came about, therefore, that the "Ranger," seeing a strange sail in the offing, left the "Drake" to go in pursuit of the stranger, Lieut. Simpson saw his chance to make off with the "Drake," and thus rid himself of the disagreeable necessity of submitting to the orders of a superior officer. This course he determined to adopt; and when Jones, having overtaken the stranger and found her a neutral, turned to rejoin his prize, he was vastly astounded at the evolutions of the "Drake." The vessel which he had left in charge of one of his trusted officers seemed to be trying to elude him. She was already hull down on the horizon, and was carrying every stitch of sail. The "Ranger" signalled to her colleague to return, but in vain. Several large ships were in sight; but Jones, perplexed by the strange antics of his consort, abandoned all thoughts of making captures, and made after the rapidly vanishing "Drake."

As the "Ranger" cut through the ugly cross seas of the channel, Jones revolved in his mind the causes which might lead to the inexplicable flight of his consort. His chief fear was that the prisoners on the "Drake" might have risen, overpowered their captors, and were then endeavoring to take the ship into a British port. Convinced that this was the true explanation of the matter, Jones made tremendous efforts to overhaul the prize before the night should give her an opportunity to elude pursuit. Every thing from jib-boom to main-truck, that would draw, was set on the



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"BON HOMME RICHARD" AND "SERAPIS."

"Ranger;" and the gallant little vessel ploughed along at a rate that almost belied her reputation as a slow craft. After an hour's run, it became evident that the "Ranger" was gaining ground. Nevertheless, darkness settled over the waters, and the "Drake" was still far in the lead. It was not until the next day that the runaway was overhauled. Upon boarding the "Drake," Jones found, to his intense indignation, that not to the revolt of the captives, but to the wilful and silly insubordination of Lieut. Simpson, the flight of the captured vessel was due. This officer, feeling himself aggrieved by something Jones had said or done, had determined to seize upon the "Drake," repair her in some French port, and thence-forward to cruise as a privateer. This plan was nipped in the bud by Jones, who put the disobedient officer in irons, and carried the "Drake" into Brest as a prize.

All Europe now rang with the praises of Paul Jones. Looked at in the calm light of history, his achievements do not appear so very remarkable. But it is none the less true that they have never been paralleled. Before the day of Paul Jones, no hostile vessel had ever swept the English Channel and Irish Sea clear of British merchantmen. And since the day of Paul Jones the exploit has never been repeated, save by the little American brig "Argus" in the War of 1812. But neither before nor since the day of Paul Jones has the spectacle of a British ship in an English port, blazing with fire applied by the torches of an enemy, been seen. And no other man than Paul Jones has, for several centuries, led an invading force down the level highways, and across the green fields, of England.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAREER OF PAUL JONES CONTINUED. — HIS SEARCH FOR A SHIP. — GIVEN COMMAND OF THE "BON HOMME RICHARD." — LANDAIS AND HIS CHARACTER. — THE FRUSTRATED MUTINY. — LANDAIS QUARRELS WITH JONES. — EDINBURGH AND LEITH THREATENED. — THE DOMINIE'S PRAYER.

WHEN Paul Jones arrived at Brest, bringing the captured Drake, he found the situation of affairs materially altered. France had acknowledged the independence of the American Colonies, and had openly espoused their cause as against that of Great Britain. It was no longer necessary to resort to cunning deceptions to buy a warship or sell a prize in a French port. French vessels, manned by French crews and commanded by French officers, were putting to sea to strike a blow against the British. French troops were being sent to America. The stars and stripes waved by the side of the *fleur de lys;* and Benjamin Franklin, the American envoy, was the lion of French society, and the idol of the Parisian mob.

Paul Jones saw in this friendship of France for the struggling colonies his opportunity. Heretofore he had been condemned to command only slow-going, weak ships. He had been hampered by a lack of funds for the payment of his crew and the purchase of provisions. More than once the inability of the impoverished Continental Congress to provide the sinews of war had forced him to go down into his own purse for the necessary funds. All this period of penury he now felt was past. He could rely upon the king of France for a proper vessel, and the funds with which to prosecute his work on the seas. Accordingly, when the "Ranger" was again ready for sea, he turned her over to the

insubordinate Lieut. Simpson, while he himself remained in France with the expectation of being provided with a better ship.

But the sturdy seaman soon found how vexatious is the lot of him who depends upon the bounty of monarchs. Ship after ship was put in commission, but no command was tendered to the distinguished American. The French naval officers had first to be attended to. Jones made earnest appeals to the minister of the marine. He brought every possible influence to bear. His claims were urged by Dr. Franklin, but all to no avail. At last an appointment came. It was to command an English prize, lately captured and brought into Brest. Thither went Jones to examine the craft. Much to his disappointment, he found her very slow; and this determined him to decline the commission.

"I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast," he wrote to a gentleman who had secured for him the appointment; "for I intend to go in harm's way. You know I believe that this is not every one's intention. Therefore, buy a frigate that sails fast, and that is sufficiently large to carry twenty-six or twenty-eight guns, not less than twelve-pounders, on one deck. I would rather be shot ashore than sent to sea in such things as the armed prizes I have described."

Five months of waiting and ceaseless solicitation of the authorities still left the sailor, who had won so many victories, stranded in shameful inactivity. He had shrunk from a personal interview with the king, trusting rather to the efforts of his friends, many of whom were in high favor at Versailles. But one day he happened to light upon an old copy of "Poor Richard's Almanac," that unique publication in which Benjamin Franklin printed so many wise maxims and witty sayings. As Jones listlessly turned its pages, his eye fell upon the maxim, —

"If you wish to have any business done faithfully and expeditiously, go and do it yourself. Otherwise, send some one."

Shutting the book, and dashing it to the floor, Jones sprang to his feet exclaiming, "I will go to Versailles this very day." Before night he set out, and soon reached the royal court. His reputation easily gained him an interview; and his frank, self-reliant way so impressed the

monarch, that in five days the American was tendered the command of the ship "Daras," mounting forty guns.

Great was the exultation of the American seaman at this happy termination of his labor. Full of gratitude to the distinguished philosopher whose advice had proved so effective, he wrote to the minister of marine, begging permission to change the name of the vessel to the "Poor Richard," or, translated into French, the "Bon Homme Richard." Permission was readily granted; and thereafter the "Bon Homme Richard," with Paul Jones on the quarter-deck, did valiant work for the cause of the young American Republic.

The "Bon Homme Richard" was lying in the harbor of l'Orient when Jones visited her to examine his new ship He found her a fairly well modelled craft, giving promise of being a good sailer. She had one of the high pitched poops that were so common in the early part of the last century, and that gave to the sterns of ships of that period the appearance of lofty towers. Originally she was a single-decked ship, mounting her battery on one gun-deck, with the exception of a few cannon on the quarter-deck and forecastle. The gun-deck mounted twenty-eight guns, all twelve-pounders. On the quarter-deck and forecastle were eight long nines. To this armament Jones at once added six eighteen-pounders, which were mounted in the gun-room below.

To man this vessel, Jones was obliged to recruit a most motley crew. Few American seamen were then in France, and he considered himself fortunate to find enough to fill the stations of officers on the quarter-deck and forward. For his crew proper he was forced to accept an undisciplined crowd of Portuguese, Norwegians, Germans, Spaniards, Swedes, Italians, Malays, Scotch, Irish, and even a few Englishmen. About a hundred and thirty-five marines were put aboard to keep order among this rabble; and, even with this aid to discipline, it is wonderful that no disturbance ever broke out in a crew that was made up of so many discordant elements.

While the "Bon Homme Richard" was being made ready for sea, the vessels that were to sail with her as consorts were making for the

rendezvous at l'Orient. These vessels were the "Pallas," "Cerf," "Vengeance," and "Alliance." The three former were small vessels, built in France, and manned wholly by Frenchmen. The "Alliance" was a powerful, well-built American frigate, carrying an American crew, but commanded by a French officer, — Capt. Landais. This vessel was the last to arrive at the rendezvous, as she had a stormy and somewhat eventful trip across the ocean.

The "Alliance" was a thirty-two gun frigate, built under the supervision of the American Marine Committee, and which had come to European waters, bringing as a passenger the distinguished Gen. Lafayette. As has been stated, she was under the command of a French naval officer, to whom the command had been offered as a compliment to France. Unfortunately the jack tars of America were not so anxious to compliment France, and looked with much disfavor upon the prospect of serving under a Frenchman. Capt. Landais, therefore, found great difficulty in getting a crew to man his frigate; and when Lafayette reached Boston, ready to embark for France, the roster of the ship in which he was to sail was still painfully incomplete. Great was the mortification of the American authorities; and the government of Massachusetts, desiring to aid the distinguished Frenchman in every way, offered to complete by impressment. It is vastly to the credit of Lafayette that he refused for a moment to countenance a method of recruiting so entirely in opposition to those principles of liberty to which he was devoted. But, though impressment was not resorted to, a plan hardly less objectionable was adopted. The British man-of-war "Somerset" had been wrecked on the New England coast some time before, and many of her crew were then in Boston. These men volunteered to join the crew of the "Alliance," though by so doing they knew that they were likely to be forced to fight against their own flag and countrymen. But the ties of nationality bear lightly upon sailors, and these men were as ready to fight under the stars and stripes as under the cross of St. George.

With a crew made up of Americans, Englishmen, and Frenchmen, the "Alliance" put to sea in the early part of January, 1779. It was the most

stormy season of the year on the tempestuous Atlantic. But the storms which racked the good ship from without were as nothing to the turbulence within. In the forecastle were three different elements of discord. British, French, and Americans quarrelled bitterly among themselves, and the jackies went about their work with a sullen air that betokened trouble brewing.

The officers suspected the impending trouble, but had little idea of its extent. They were living over a volcano which was liable to burst forth at any moment. The Englishmen in the crew, who numbered some seventy or eighty, had determined to mutiny, and had perfected all their plans for the uprising. Their intention was not only to seize the ship, and take her into an English port, but they proposed to wreak their hatred in the bloodiest form upon the officers. Capt. Landais, as the special object of their hate, was to be put into an open boat without food, water, oars, or sails. Heavy irons were to bind his wrists and ankles, and he was to be set adrift to starve on the open ocean. The fate of the surgeon and marine officer was to be equally hard. They were to be hanged and quartered, and their bodies cast into the sea. The sailing-master was to be seized up to the mizzen-mast, stripped to the waist, and his back cut to pieces with the cat-of-nine-tails; after which he was to be slowly hacked to pieces with cutlasses, and thrown into the sea. The gunner, carpenter, and boatswain were to be mercifully treated. No torture was prepared for them, but they were to be promptly put to death. As to the lieutenants, they were to be given the choice between navigating the ship to the nearest British port, or walking the plank.

This sanguinary programme the mutineers discussed day and night. The ringleaders were in the same watch, and in the silent hours of the night matured their plans, and picked out men whom they thought would join them. One by one they cautiously chose their associates. The sailor whom the mutineers thought was a safe man would be led quietly apart from his fellows to some secluded nook on the gun-deck; and there, with many pledges to secrecy, the plot would be revealed, and his assistance asked. Or perhaps of two men out on the end of a tossing yard-arm,

far above the raging waters, one would be a mutineer, and would take that opportunity to try to win his fellow sailor to the cause. So the mutiny spread apace; and the volcano was almost ready to burst forth, when all was discovered, and the plans of the mutineers were happily defeated.

The conspirators had succeeded in gaining the support of all the Englishmen in the crew, as well as many of the sailors of other nationalities. So numerous were their adherents, that they were well able to capture the ship; but before so doing they sought to gain one more recruit. This man was an American sailor, who had lived long in Ireland, and spoke with a slight brogue, that led the conspirators to think him a subject of the king, and an enemy to the revolted colonies. This man was known to have some knowledge of navigation, and the mutineers felt that his assistance would be essential to the success of their plot. Though they had planned to force the lieutenant, under penalty of death, to navigate the vessel into a British port, they had no means of telling whether the lieutenant should play them false. It would be an easy matter for an officer to take the ship into a French port, where the lives of the conspirators should pay the penalty of their misdeeds. Accordingly, it was highly important for them to number among them some one versed in the science of navigation; and, with this end in view, they turned to the young Irish-American.

The young seaman proved to be possessed of the loyalty and shrewdness of the Yankee, together with a touch of the blarney of the genuine Irishman. He listened to the complaints of the mutineers, sympathized with their grievances, entered heartily into their plans, and by his apparent interest in the conspiracy soon became looked upon as one of the chief ringleaders.

He learned that the plan of the conspirators was to assemble on deck about daylight on a certain day when one of the conspirators should be posted in the tops as lookout. This man was to raise the cry of "Sail, ho!" when the officers and passengers would of course come to the quarter-deck unarmed. The mutineers would commence operations by seizing them in a body. Then, separating into four parties, the

conspirators would seize upon the ship. On the forecastle were mounted four nine-pound guns. These were usually kept charged with blank cartridge only; but a gunner's mate, who was one of the ringleaders, had quietly slipped a charge of canister into each gun. Should the officers show signs of resistance, these cannon were to be trained aft, and the quarter-deck swept by their discharge. Discipline on a man-of-war requires that the crew should be kept disarmed, except in time of battle; the cutlasses, pikes, and pistols being given over to the armorer. But a sergeant of marines had done the cause of the mutineers good service, by purloining some muskets, and handing them over to the ringleaders.

Having thus gained full knowledge of the plans of the mutineers, the loyal seaman sought the first opportunity to warn the officers of the ship. But not until three o'clock on the afternoon before the day set for the mutiny could he manage to slip into the captain's cabin unseen by the conspirators. Landais and Lafayette were seated there talking.

"Well, what's wanted now?" asked the captain in the peremptory tone officers assume in speaking to a sailor.

The intruder stammered and looked confused, but finally managed to tell the story. Landais was amazed. That so dangerous a conspiracy should have been nurtured in his crew, astonished him beyond expression. But he wasted no time in vain conjectures. Quietly the word was passed to the officers and passengers to assemble in the captain's cabin. Some trusty petty officers were given arms to distribute among the American and French seamen who had not been infected with the fever of mutiny. At a given signal the officers and passengers rushed to the quarter-deck. The American and French seamen joined them; and the conspirators suddenly found themselves confronted by an angry body of determined men, fully armed.

The leading mutineers were pointed out by the informer, instantly seized, and hurried below in irons. Then the work of arresting the other conspirators began, and was continued until about forty of the English were in irons. While the work was progressing, a square-rigged ship hove in sight, and was soon made out to be one of the

enemy's twenty-gun ships. Under ordinary circumstances, the "Alliance" would have sought to give battle to the enemy; but in the present instance, with mutiny rife among his crew, Capt. Landais thought it his wisest course to avoid the stranger. A few days later, the "Alliance" arrived at Brest, where the mutineers were thrown into jail, and kept in close confinement, until exchanged for American prisoners in the hands of the British.

But to return to Paul Jones, whom we left with the "Bon Homme Richard" lying at anchor in the harbor of l'Orient waiting for the arrival of his allies. On the 19th of June, 1779, all were ready to sail, and left the harbor with a few coasters and transports under convoy. The "Bon Homme Richard" was the largest vessel of the little fleet; next came the "Alliance," under command of Capt. Landais; then the "Pallas," an old merchantman hastily remodelled, and mounting thirty-two guns; then the "Cerf" with eighteen guns, and the "Vengeance" with twelve. Though not a very formidable armada, this little fleet might have done great good to the American cause, had Paul Jones been given proper authority, and had his daring plans been countenanced by the French authorities. But, though nominally commander-in-chief, Jones soon found that he had no means of enforcing his authority. He found that the three Frenchmen in command of the other vessels of the squadron looked upon him as a partner in the enterprise, rather than as a leader with absolute authority. They paid no heed to the signals set at the fore of the flagship. They wilfully disobeyed orders. Worse than all, they proved to be poor seamen; and the squadron had hardly got into blue water before the "Alliance" was run foul of the "Richard," losing her own mizzen-mast, and tearing away the head and bowsprit of the flagship. Thus, after long months of preparation for sea, Jones found himself forced to return to port to refit. It has been charged that this accident was not altogether accidental, so far as the "Alliance" was concerned. Landais, the commander of that vessel, hated Jones, and was insanely jealous of the man who outranked him. The collision was only the first of a series of mishaps, all of which Landais ascribed to accident, but

which unprejudiced readers must confess seem to have been inspired by malice or the results of gross incompetence.

A few days sufficed to repair all damage, and again the vessels sought the open sea. When two days out, a strange sail was sighted. Jones crowded all sail on the "Richard," and set out in hot pursuit, but found, to his bitter disappointment, that his ship was a wretchedly slow sailer. Therefore, signalling to the swift-sailing "Cerf" to follow the stranger, he abandoned the chase to the smaller craft. All night long the cutter followed in the wake of the stranger, and when day broke the two vessels were near enough to each other to readily make out each other's character. The stranger proved to be a small English cruiser of fourteen guns. Her captain was no poltroon; for as soon as he discovered that the ship from which he had been trying to escape was but little larger than his own, he came about, and, running down upon the "Cerf," opened fire. The action was a sharp one. The two vessels were fairly matched and well fought. The thunder of their broadsides resounded far and wide over the ocean. For an hour they grappled in deadly strife. The tide of battle turned now to one side, and now to the other. But at last the superior metal of the "Cerf" won for her the victory. With her battered prize in tow, she sought to rejoin the squadron, but unluckily fell in with a British frigate that had been attracted by the sound of the cannonading. It was useless to think of saving the prize: so the "Cerf" abandoned it, and after a hard chase escaped, and put into the harbor of l'Orient.

In the mean time, the squadron had become separated; and, after a fortnight's fruitless cruising, all the vessels returned to l'Orient. Here they lay until the middle of August. More than three months had passed since Jones had been given command of the "Richard." Most of the time had been spent in port. The little cruising that had been done had been unproductive of results. Dissension and jealousy made the squadron absolutely ineffective. As for the "Bon Homme Richard," she had proved a failure; being unable to overhaul the enemy that she wished to engage, or escape from the man-of-war she might wish to avoid. Jones saw his reputation fast slipping away from him. Bitterly he bewailed the

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THE EXPLOSION ON THE "SERAPIS."

fate that had put him at the mercy of a lot of quarrelsome Frenchmen. He determined that when once again he got to sea he would ignore his consorts, and fight the battles of his country with his own ship only.

It was on the 14th of August that the squadron weighed anchor, and left the harbor of l'Orient. The "Richard" was greatly strengthened by the addition to her crew of about one hundred American seamen, who had been sent to France from England in exchange for a number of English prisoners. With her sailed the same vessels that had previously made up the squadron, together with two French privateers,—the "Monsieur" and the "Granville." Four days after sailing, a large French ship in charge of a British prize-crew was sighted. The whole squadron gave chase; and the "Monsieur," being the swiftest sailer of the fleet, recaptured the prize. Then arose a quarrel. The privateersmen claimed that the prize was theirs alone. They had captured it, and the regular naval officers had no authority over them. To this Capt. Jones vigorously demurred, and, taking the prize from its captors, sent it to l'Orient to be disposed of in accordance with the laws. In high dudgeon, the privateers vowed vengeance, and that night the "Monsieur" left the squadron. She was a fine, fast vessel, mounting forty guns; and her departure greatly weakened the fleet.

A few days later a second serious loss was encountered. The fleet was lying off Cape Clear, only a few miles from the shore. The day was perfectly calm. Not a breath of wind ruffled the calm surface of the water. The sails flapped idly against the mast. The sailors lay about the decks, trying to keep cool, and lazily watching the distant shore. Far off in the distance a white sail glimmered on the horizon. It showed no sign of motion, and was clearly becalmed. After some deliberation, Capt. Jones determined to attempt to capture the stranger by means of boats. The two largest boats, manned with crews of picked men, were sent out to hail the vessel, and, if she proved to be an enemy, to capture her. In this they were successful, and returned next day, bringing the captured craft.

But, while the two boats were still out after the enemy's ship, the tide

changed; and Capt. Jones soon saw that his ship was in danger from a powerful current, that seemed to be sweeping her on shore. A few hundred yards from the ship, two dangerous reefs, known as the Skallocks and the Blasketts, reared their black heads above the calm surface of the sea. Toward these rocks the "Bon Homme Richard" was drifting, when Jones, seeing the danger, ordered out two boats to tow the ship to a less perilous position. As the best men of the crew had been sent away to capture the brig, the crews of the two boats were made up of the riff-raff of the crew. Many of them were Englishmen, mere mercenary sailors, who had shipped on the Richard, secretly intending to desert at the first opportunity. Therefore, when night fell, as they were still in the boats trying to pull the "Richard's" head around, they cut the ropes and made off for the shore.

The desertion was discovered immediately. The night was clear, and by the faint light of the stars the course of the receding boats could be traced. The sailing-master of the "Richard," a Mr. Trent, being the first to discover the treachery, sprang into a boat with a few armed men, and set out in hot pursuit. The bow-gun of the "Richard" was hastily trained on the deserters, and a few cannon-shot sent after them; but without effect. Before the pursuing boat could overhaul the fugitives, a dense bank of gray fog settled over the water, and pursued and pursuers were hidden from each other and from the gaze of those on the man-of-war. All night long the fog, like a moist, impenetrable curtain, rested on the ocean. The next day the "Cerf" set out to find the missing boats. As she neared the shore, to avoid raising an alarm, she hoisted British colors. Hardly had she done so when she was seen by Trent and his companions. The fog made the outlines of the cutter indistinct, and magnified her in the eyes of the Americans, so that they mistook her for an English man-of-war. To avoid what they thought would lead to certain capture on the water, they ran their boat ashore, and speedily fell into the hands of the British coast guard. They were at once thrown into prison, where the unfortunate Trent soon died. The rest of the party were exchanged later in the war.

The loss of the boats, and capture of Mr. Trent and his followers, were not the only unfortunate results of this incident; for the "Cerf" became lost in the fog, and before she could rejoin the fleet a violent gale sprang up, and she was carried back to the coast of France. She never again returned to join the fleet, and Jones found his force again depleted.

But the effective force of the squadron under the command of Paul Jones was weakened far more by the eccentric and mutinous actions of Capt. Landais of the "Alliance" than by any losses by desertion or capture. When the news of the loss of two boats by desertion reached the "Alliance," Landais straightway went to the "Richard," and entering the cabin began to upbraid Jones in unmeasured terms for having lost two boats through his folly in sending boats to capture a brig.

"It is not true, Capt. Landais," answered Jones, "that the boats which are lost are the two which were sent to capture the brig."

"Do you tell me I lie?" screamed the Frenchman, white with anger. His officers strove to pacify him, but without avail; and he left the "Richard" vowing that he would challenge Capt. Jones, and kill him. Shortly thereafter the "Richard" captured a very valuable prize, — a ship mounting twenty-two guns, and loaded with sails, rigging, anchors, cables, and other essential articles for the navy Great Britain was building on the Lakes. By desertion and other causes, the crew of the "Richard" was greatly depleted, and not enough men could be spared to man the prize. Jones applied to Landais for aid. In response the Frenchman said, —

"If it is your wish that I should take charge of the prize, I shall not allow any boat or any individual from the 'Bon Homme Richard' to go near her."

To this absurd stipulation Jones agreed. Landais, having thus assumed complete charge of the prize, showed his incompetence by sending her, together with a prize taken by the "Alliance," to Bergen in Norway. The Danish Government, being on friendly terms with England, immediately surrendered the vessels to the British ambassador; and the cause of the young republic was cheated of more than two hundred thousand dollars through the insane negligence of the French captain.

Ever thereafter, Landais manifested the most insolent indifference to the orders of Capt. Jones, to whom, as his superior officer, he should render implicit obedience. He came and went as he saw fit. The "Alliance" would disappear from the squadron, and return again after two or three days' absence, without apology or explanation. Jones soon learned to look with indifference upon the antics of his consort, and considered his squadron as composed of the "Richard," "Vengeance," and "Pallas" only.

On the 15th of September, the three vessels lay off the port of Leith, a thriving city, which was then, as now, the seaport for the greater city of Edinburgh, which stands a little farther inland. Jones had come to this point cherishing one of those daring plans of which his mind was so fertile. He had learned that the harbor was full of shipping, and defended only by a single armed vessel of twenty guns. Shore batteries there were none. The people of the town were resting in fancied security, and had no idea that the dreaded Paul Jones was at their very harbor's mouth. It would have been an easy matter for the three cruisers to make a dash into the harbor, take some distinguished prisoners, demand a huge ransom, fire the shipping, and escape again to the open sea. Had Jones been in reality, as he was in name, the commander of the little fleet, the exploit would have been performed. But the lack of authority which had hampered him throughout his cruise paralyzed him here. By the time he had overcome the timid objections of the captains of the "Vengeance" and the "Pallas," all Leith was aroused. Still Jones persevered. His arrangements were carefully perfected. Troops were to be landed under command of Lieut.-Col. Chamillard, who was to lay before the chief magistrate of the town the following letter, written by Jones himself: —

"I do not wish to distress the poor inhabitants. My intention is only to demand your contribution toward the reimbursement which Britain owes to the much injured citizens of America. Savages would blush at the unmanly violation and rapacity that have marked the tracks of British tyranny in America, from which neither virgin innocence nor helpless age has been a plea of protection or pity.

"Leith and its port now lay at our mercy. And did not the plea of humanity stay the just hand of retaliation, I should without advertisement lay it in ashes. Before I proceed to that stern duty as an officer, my duty as a man induces me to propose to you, by means of a reasonable ransom, to prevent such a scene of horror and distress. For this reason, I have authorized Lieut.-Col. de Chamillard to agree with you on the terms of ransom, allowing you exactly half an hour's reflection before you finally accept or reject the terms which he shall propose."

The landing parties having been chosen, the order of attack mapped out, and part to be taken by each boat's-crew accurately defined, the three vessels advanced to the attack. It was a bright Sunday morning. A light breeze blowing on shore wafted the three vessels gently along the smooth surface of the bay. It is said that as the invaders passed the little town of Kirkaldy, the people were at church, but, seeing the three men-of-war passing, deserted the sacred edifice for the beach, where the gray-haired pastor, surrounded by his flock, offered the following remarkable appeal to the Deity: —

"Now, dear Lord, dinna ye think it a shame for ye to send this vile pirate to rob our folk o' Kirkaldy? Ye ken that they are puir enow already, and hae naething to spare. The way the wind blaws, he'll be here in a jiffy. And wha kens what he may do? He's nae too good for ony thing. Mickles the mischief he has done already. He'll burn their hooses, take their very claes, and strip them to the very sark. And waes me, wha kens but that the bluidy villain might tak' their lives! The puir weemin are most frightened out of their wits, and the bairns screeching after them. I canna think of it! I canna think of it!

"I hae long been a faithful servant to ye, O Lord. But gin ye dinna turn the wind about, and blaw the scoundrel out of our gate, I'll nae stir a foot, but will just sit here till the tide comes. Sae tak' your will o't."

Never was prayer more promptly answered. Hardly had the pastor concluded his prayer, when the wind veered round, and soon a violent gale was blowing off shore. In the teeth of the wind, the ships could

make no headway. The gale increased in violence until it rivalled in fierceness a tornado. The sea was lashed into fury, and great waves arose, on the crests of which the men-of-war were tossed about like fragile shells. The coal-ship which had been captured was so racked and torn by the heavy seas, that her seams opened, and she foundered so speedily, that only by the most active efforts was her crew saved. After several hours' ineffectual battling with the gale, the ships were forced to come about and run out to sea; and Jones suffered the mortification of witnessing the failure of his enterprise, after having been within gunshot of the town that he had hoped to capture. As for the good people of Kirkaldy, they were convinced that their escape from the daring seamen was wholly due to the personal influence of their pastor with the Deity; and the worthy parson lived long afterward, ever held in the most mighty veneration by the people of his flock.

CHAPTER IX.

CAREER OF PAUL JONES CONCLUDED. — THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE "BON HOMME RICHARD" AND THE "SERAPIS." — TREACHERY OF LANDAIS. — JONES'S GREAT VICTORY. — LANDAIS STEALS THE "ALLIANCE." — JONES IN COMMAND OF THE "ARIEL." — THE "ARIEL" IN THE STORM. — ARRIVAL IN AMERICA.

AFTER this adventure, the three vessels continued their cruise along the eastern coast of Scotland. Continued good fortune, in the way of prizes, rather soothed the somewhat chafed feelings of Capt. Jones, and he soon recovered from the severe disappointment caused by the failure of his attack upon Leith. He found good reason to believe that the report of his exploits had spread far and wide in England, and that British sea-captains were using every precaution to avoid encountering him. British vessels manifested an extreme disinclination to come within hailing distance of any of the cruisers, although all three were so disguised that it seemed impossible to make out their warlike character. One fleet of merchantmen that caught sight of the "Bon Homme Richard" and the "Pallas" ran into the River Humber, to the mouth of which they were pursued by the two men-of-war. Lying at anchor outside the bar, Jones made signal for a pilot, keeping the British flag flying at his peak. Two pilot-boats came out; and Jones, assuming the character of a British naval officer, learned from them, that, besides the merchantmen lying at anchor in the river, a British frigate lay there waiting to convoy a fleet of merchantmen to the north. Jones tried to lure the frigate out with a signal that the pilots revealed to him; but, though she weighed anchor, she was driven back by strong head-winds that were blowing. Disappointed in this plan, Jones continued his

cruise. Soon after he fell in with the "Alliance" and the "Vengeance;" and, while off Flamborough Head, the little squadron encountered a fleet of forty-one merchant ships, that, at the sight of the dreaded Yankee cruisers, crowded together like a flock of frightened pigeons, and made all sail for the shore; while two stately men-of-war — the "Serapis, forty-four," and the "Countess of Scarborough, twenty-two" — moved forward to give battle to the Americans.

Jones now stood upon the threshold of his greatest victory. His bold and chivalric mind had longed for battle, and recoiled from the less glorious pursuit of burning helpless merchantmen, and terrorizing small towns and villages. He now saw before him a chance to meet the enemy in a fair fight, muzzle to muzzle, and with no overpowering odds on either side. Although the Americans had six vessels to the Englishmen's two, the odds were in no wise in their favor. Two of the vessels were pilot-boats, which, of course, kept out of the battle. The "Vengeance," though ordered to render the larger vessels any possible assistance, kept out of the fight altogether, and even neglected to make any attempt to overhaul the flying band of merchantmen. As for the "Alliance," under the erratic Landais, she only entered the conflict at the last moment; and then her broadsides, instead of being delivered into the enemy, crashed through the already shattered sides of the "Bon Homme Richard." Thus the actual combatants were the "Richard" with forty guns, against the "Serapis" with forty-four; and the "Pallas" with twenty-two guns, against the "Countess of Scarborough" with twenty-two.

It was about seven o'clock in the evening of a clear September day — the twenty-third — that the hostile vessels bore down upon each other, making rapid preparations for the impending battle. The sea was fast turning gray, as the deepening twilight robbed the sky of its azure hue. A brisk breeze was blowing, that filled out the bellying sails of the ships, and beat the waters into little waves capped with snowy foam. In the west the rosy tints of the autumnal sunset were still warm in the sky. Nature was in one of her most smiling moods, as these men with set faces, and

hearts throbbing with the mingled emotions of fear and excitement, stood silent at their guns, or worked busily at the ropes of the great war-ships.

As soon as he became convinced of the character of the two English ships, Jones beat his crew to quarters, and signalled his consorts to form in line of battle. The people on the "Richard" went cheerfully to their guns; and though the ship was extremely short-handed, and crowded with prisoners, no voice was raised against giving immediate battle to the enemy. The actions of the other vessels of the American fleet, however, gave little promise of any aid from that quarter. When the enemy was first sighted, the swift-sailing "Alliance" dashed forward to reconnoitre. As she passed the "Pallas," Landais cried out, that, if the stranger proved to be a forty-four, the only course for the Americans was immediate flight. Evidently the result of his investigations convinced him that in flight lay his only hope of safety; for he quickly hauled off, and stood away from the enemy. The "Vengeance," too, ran off to windward, leaving the "Richard" and the "Pallas" to bear the brunt of battle.

It was by this time quite dark, and the position of the ships was outlined by the rows of open portholes gleaming with the lurid light of the battle-lanterns. On each ship rested a stillness like that of death itself. The men stood at their guns silent and thoughtful. Sweet memories of home and loved ones mingled with fearful anticipations of death or of mangling wounds in the minds of each. The little lads whose duty in time of action it was to carry cartridges from the magazine to the gunners had ceased their boyish chatter, and stood nervously at their stations. Officers walked up and down the decks, speaking words of encouragement to the men, glancing sharply at primers and breechings to see that all was ready, and ever and anon stooping to peer through the porthole at the line of slowly moving lights that told of the approach of the enemy. On the quarter-deck, Paul Jones, with his officers about him, stood carefully watching the movements of the enemy through a night glass, giving occasionally a quiet order to the man at the wheel, and now and then sending an agile midshipman below with orders to the armorer, or aloft with orders for the sharp-shooters posted in the tops.

As the night came on, the wind died away to a gentle breeze, that hardly ruffled the surface of the water, and urged the ships toward each other but sluggishly. As they came within pistol-shot of each other, bow to bow, and going on opposite tacks, a hoarse cry came from the deck of the "Serapis," —

"What ship is that?"

"What is that you say?"

"What ship is that? Answer immediately, or I shall fire into you."

Instantly with a flash and roar both vessels opened fire. The thunder of the broadsides reverberated over the waters; and the bright flash of the cannon, together with the pale light of the moon just rising, showed Flamborough Head crowded with multitudes who had come out to witness the grand yet awful spectacle of a naval duel.

The very first broadside seemed enough to wreck the fortunes of the "Richard." In her gun-room were mounted six long eighteens, the only guns she carried that were of sufficient weight to be matched against the heavy ordnance of the "Serapis." At the very first discharge, two of these guns burst with frightful violence. Huge masses of iron were hurled in every direction, cutting through beams and stanchions, crashing through floors and bulkheads, and tearing through the agonized bodies of the men who served the guns. Hardly a man who was stationed in the gun-room escaped unhurt in the storm of iron and splinters. Several huge blocks of iron crashed through the upper deck, injuring the people on the deck above, and causing the cry to be raised, that the magazine had blown up. This unhappy calamity not only rendered useless the whole battery of eighteen-pounders, thus forcing Jones to fight an eighteen-pounder frigate with a twelve-pounder battery, but it spread a panic among the men, who saw the dangers of explosion added to the peril they were in by reason of the enemy's continued fire.

Jones himself left the quarter-deck, and rushed forward among the men, cheering them on, and arousing them to renewed activity by his exertions. Now he would lend a hand at training some gun, now pull at a rope, or help a lagging powder-monkey on his way. His pluck and

enthusiasm infused new life into the men; and they threw the heavy guns about like playthings, and cheered loudly as each shot told.

The two ships were at no time separated by a greater distance than half a pistol-shot, and were continually manœuvring to cross each others' bows, and get in a raking broadside. In this attempt, they crossed from one to the other side of each other; so that now the port and now the starboard battery would be engaged. From the shore these evolutions were concealed under a dense cloud of smoke, and the spectators could only see the tops of the two vessels moving slowly about before the light breeze; while the lurid flashes of the cannon, and constant thunder of the broadsides, told of the deadly work going on. At a little distance were the "Countess of Scarborough" and the "Pallas," linked in deadly combat, and adding the roar of their cannon to the general turmoil. It seemed to the watchers on the heights that war was coming very close to England.

The "Serapis" first succeeded in getting a raking position; and, as she slowly crossed her antagonist's bow, her guns were fired, loaded again, and again discharged, — the heavy bolts crashing into the "Richard's" bow, and ranging aft, tearing the flesh of the brave fellows on the decks, and cutting through timbers and cordage in their frightful course. At this moment, the Americans almost despaired of the termination of the conflict. The "Richard" proved to be old and rotten, and the enemy's shot seemed to tear her timbers to pieces; while the "Serapis" was new, with timbers that withstood the shock of the balls like steel armor. Jones saw that in a battle with great guns he was sure to be the loser. He therefore resolved to board.

Soon the "Richard" made an attempt to cross the bows of the "Serapis," but not having way enough failed; and the "Serapis" ran foul of her, with her long bowsprit projecting over the stern of the American ship. Springing from the quarter-deck, Jones with his own hands swung grappling-irons into the rigging of the enemy, and made the ships fast. As he bent to his work, he was a prominent target for every sharp-shooter on the British vessel, and the bullets hummed thickly

about his ears; but he never flinched. His work done, he clambered back to the quarter-deck, and set about gathering the boarders. The two vessels swung alongside each other. The cannonading was redoubled, and the heavy ordnance of the "Serapis" told fearfully upon the "Richard." The American gunners were driven from their guns by the flying cloud of shot and splinters. Each party thought the other was about to board. The darkness and the smoke made all vision impossible; and the boarders on each vessel were crouched behind the bulwarks, ready to give a hot reception to their enemies. This suspense caused a temporary lull in the firing, and Capt. Pearson of the "Serapis" shouted out through the sulphurous blackness, —

"Have you struck your colors?"

"I have not yet begun to fight," replied Jones; and again the thunder of the cannon awakened the echoes on the distant shore. As the firing recommenced, the two ships broke away and drifted apart. Again the "Serapis" sought to get a raking position; but by this time Jones had determined that his only hope lay in boarding. Terrible had been the execution on his ship. The cockpit was filled with the wounded. The mangled remains of the dead lay thick about the decks. The timbers of the ship were greatly shattered, and her cordage was so badly cut that skilful manœuvring was impossible. Many shot-holes were beneath the water-line, and the hold was rapidly filling. Therefore, Jones determined to run down his enemy, and get out his boarders, at any cost.

Soon the two vessels were foul again. Capt. Pearson, knowing that his advantage lay in long-distance fighting, strove to break away. Jones bent all his energies to the task of keeping the ships together. Meantime the battle raged fiercely. Jones himself, in his official report of the battle, thus describes the course of the fight: —

"I directed the fire of one of the three cannon against the main-mast with double-headed shot, while the other two were exceedingly well served with grape and canister shot, to silence the enemy's musketry, and clear her decks, which was at last effected. The enemy were, as I have since understood, on the instant for calling for quarter, when the

cowardice or treachery of three of my under officers induced them to call to the enemy. The English commodore asked me if I demanded quarter; and I having answered him in the negative, they renewed the battle with double fury. They were unable to stand the deck; but the fury of their cannon, especially the lower battery, which was entirely formed of eighteen-pounders, was incessant. Both ships were set on fire in various places, and the scene was dreadful beyond the reach of language. To account for the timidity of my three under officers (I mean the gunner, the carpenter, and the master-at-arms), I must observe that the two first were slightly wounded; and as the ship had received various shots under water, and one of the pumps being shot away, the carpenter expressed his fear that she would sink, and the other two concluded that she was sinking, which occasioned the gunner to run aft on the poop, without my knowledge, to strike the colors. Fortunately for me a cannon-ball had done that before by carrying away the ensign staff: he was, therefore, reduced to the necessity of sinking — as he supposed — or of calling for quarter; and he preferred the latter."

Indeed, the petty officers were little to be blamed for considering the condition of the "Richard" hopeless. The great guns of the "Serapis," with their muzzles not twenty feet away, were hurling solid shot and grape through the flimsy shell of the American ship. So close together did the two ships come at times, that the rammers were sometimes thrust into the portholes of the opposite ship in loading. When the ships first swung together, the lower ports of the "Serapis" were closed to prevent the Americans boarding through them. But in the heat of the conflict the ports were quickly blown off, and the iron throats of the great guns again protruded, and dealt out their messages of death. How frightful was the scene! In the two great ships were more than seven hundred men, their eyes lighted with the fire of hatred, their faces blackened with powder or made ghastly by streaks of blood. Cries of pain, yells of rage, prayers, and curses rose shrill above the thunderous monotone of the cannonade. Both ships were on fire; and the black smoke of the conflagration, mingled with the gray gunpowder smoke, and lighted up by the

red flashes of the cannonade, added to the terrible picturesqueness of the scene.

The "Richard" seemed like a spectre ship, so shattered was her frame-work. From the main-mast to the stern post, her timbers above the water-line were shot away, a few blackened posts alone preventing the upper deck from falling. Through this ruined shell swept the shot of the "Serapis," finding little to impede their flight save human flesh and bone. Great streams of water were pouring into the hold. The pitiful cries of nearly two hundred prisoners aroused the compassion of an officer, who ran below and liberated them. Driven from the hold by the in-pouring water, these unhappy men ran to the deck, only to be swept down by the storm of cannon-shot and bullets. Fire, too, encompassed them; and the flames were so fast sweeping down upon the magazine, that Capt. Jones ordered the powder-kegs to be brought up and thrown into the sea. At this work, and at the pumps, the prisoners were kept employed until the end of the action.

But though the heavy guns of the "Serapis" had it all their own way below, shattering the hull of the "Richard," and driving the Yankee gunners from their quarters, the conflict, viewed from the tops, was not so one-sided. The Americans crowded on the forecastle and in the tops, where they continued the battle with musketry and hand-grenades, with such murderous effect that the British were driven entirely from the upper deck. Once a party of about one hundred picked men, mustered below by Capt. Pearson, rushed to the upper deck of the "Serapis," and thence made a descent upon the deck of the "Richard," firing pistols, brandishing cutlasses, and yelling like demons. But the Yankee tars were ready for them at that game, and gave the boarders so spirited a reception with pikes and cutlasses, that they were ready enough to swarm over the bulwarks, and seek again the comparative safety of their own ship.

But all this time, though the Americans were making a brave and desperate defence, the tide of battle was surely going against them. Though they held the deck of the "Richard" secure against all comers,

yet the Englishmen were cutting the ship away from beneath them, with continued heavy broadsides. Suddenly the course of battle was changed, and victory took her stand with the Americans, all through the daring and coolness of one man, — no officer, but an humble jacky.

The rapid and accurate fire of the sharp-shooters on the "Richard" had driven all the riflemen of the "Serapis" from their posts in the tops. Seeing this, the Americans swarmed into the rigging of their own ship, and from that elevated station poured down a destructive fire of hand-grenades upon the decks of the enemy. The sailors on the deck of the "Richard" seconded this attack, by throwing the same missiles through the open ports of the enemy.

At last one American topman, filling a bucket with grenades, and hanging it on his left arm, clambered out on the yard-arm of the "Richard," that stretched far out over the deck of the British ship. Cautiously the brave fellow crept out on the slender spar. His comrades below watched his progress, while the sharp-shooters kept a wary eye on the enemy, lest some watchful rifleman should pick off the adventurous blue-jacket. Little by little the nimble sailor crept out on the yard, until he was over the crowded gun-deck of the "Serapis." Then, lying at full length on the spar, and somewhat protected by it, he began to shower his missiles upon the enemy's gun-deck. Great was the execution done by each grenade; but at last, one better aimed than the rest fell through the main hatch to the main deck. There was a flash, then a succession of quick explosions; a great sheet of flame gushed up through the hatchway, and a chorus of cries told of some frightful tragedy enacted below.

It seemed that the powder-boys of the "Serapis" had been too active in bringing powder to the guns, and, instead of bringing cartridges as needed, had kept one charge in advance of the demand; so that behind every gun stood a cartridge, making a line of cartridges on the deck from bow to stern. Several cartridges had been broken, so that much loose powder lay upon the deck. This was fired by the discharge of the hand-grenade, and communicated the fire to the cartridges, which exploded

in rapid succession, horribly burning scores of men. More than twenty men were killed instantly; and so great was the flame and the force of the explosion, that many of them were left with nothing on but the collars and wristbands of their shirts, and the waistbands of their trousers. It is impossible to conceive of the horror of the sight.

Capt. Pearson in his official report of the battle, speaking of this occurrence, says, "A hand-grenade being thrown in at one of the lower ports, a cartridge of powder was set on fire, the flames of which, running from cartridge to cartridge all the way aft, blew up the whole of the people and officers that were quartered abaft the main-mast; from which unfortunate circumstance those guns were rendered useless for the remainder of the action, and I fear that the greater part of the people will lose their lives."

This event changed the current of the battle. The English were hemmed between decks by the fire of the American topmen, and they found that not even then were they protected from the fiery hail of hand-grenades. The continual pounding of double-headed shot from a gun which Jones had trained upon the main-mast of the enemy had finally cut away that spar; and it fell with a crash upon the deck, bringing down spars and rigging with it. Flames were rising from the tarred cordage, and spreading to the framework of the ship. The Americans saw victory within their grasp.

But at this moment a new and most unsuspected enemy appeared upon the scene. The "Alliance," which had stood aloof during the heat of the conflict, now appeared, and, after firing a few shots into the "Serapis," ranged slowly down along the "Richard," pouring a murderous fire of grape-shot into the already shattered ship. Jones thus tells the story of this treacherous and wanton assault: —

"I now thought that the battle was at an end. But, to my utter astonishment, he discharged a broadside full into the stern of the 'Bon Homme Richard.' We called to him for God's sake to forbear. Yet he passed along the off-side of the ship, and continued firing. There was no possibility of his mistaking the enemy's ship for the 'Bon Homme Richard,'

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A GUN DECK IN ACTION.

there being the most essential difference in their appearance and construction. Besides, it was then full moonlight; and the sides of the 'Bon Homme Richard' were all black, and the sides of the enemy's ship were yellow. Yet, for the greater security, I showed the signal for our reconnoissance, by putting out three lanterns, — one at the bow, one at the stern, and one at the middle, in a horizontal line.

"Every one cried that he was firing into the wrong ship, but nothing availed. He passed around, firing into the 'Bon Homme Richard,' head, stern, and broadside, and by one of his volleys killed several of my best men, and mortally wounded a good officer of the forecastle. My situation was truly deplorable. The 'Bon Homme Richard' received several shots under the water from the 'Alliance.' The leak gained on the pumps, and the fire increased much on board both ships. Some officers entreated me to strike, of whose courage and sense I entertain a high opinion. I would not, however, give up the point."

Fortunately Landais did not persist in his cowardly attack upon his friends in the almost sinking ship, but sailed off, and allowed the "Richard" to continue her life-and-death struggle with her enemy. The struggle was not now of long duration; for Capt. Pearson, seeing that his ship was a perfect wreck, and that the fire was gaining headway, hauled down his colors with his own hands, since none of his men could be persuaded to brave the fire from the tops of the "Richard."

As the proud emblem of Great Britain fluttered down, Lieut. Richard Dale turned to Capt. Jones, and asked permission to board the prize. Receiving an affirmative answer, he jumped on the gunwale, seized the mainbrace-pendant, and swung himself upon the quarter-deck of the captured ship. Midshipman Mayrant, with a large party of sailors, followed. So great was the confusion on the "Serapis," that few of the Englishmen knew that the ship had been surrendered. As Mayrant came aboard, he was mistaken for the leader of a boarding-party, and run through the thigh with a pike.

Capt. Pearson was found standing alone upon the quarter-deck, contemplating with a sad face the shattered condition of his once noble

ship, and the dead bodies of his brave fellows lying about the decks. Stepping up to him, Lieut. Dale said, —

"Sir, I have orders to send you on board the ship alongside."

At this moment, the first lieutenant of the "Serapis" came up hastily, and inquired, —

"Has the enemy struck her flag?"

"No, sir," answered Dale. "On the contrary, you have struck to us."

Turning quickly to his commander, the English lieutenant asked, —

"Have you struck, sir?"

"Yes, I have," was the brief reply.

"I have nothing more to say," remarked the officer, and turning about was in the act of going below, when Lieut. Dale stopped him, saying, —

"It is my duty to request you, sir, to accompany Capt. Pearson on board the ship alongside."

"If you will first permit me to go below," responded the other, "I will silence the firing of the lower deck guns."

"This cannot be permitted," was the response; and, silently bowing his head, the lieutenant followed his chief to the victorious ship, while two midshipmen went below to stop the firing.

Lieut. Dale remained in command of the "Serapis." Seating himself on the binnacle, he ordered the lashings which had bound the two ships throughout the bloody conflict to be cut. Then the head-sails were braced back, and the wheel put down. But, as the ship had been anchored at the beginning of the battle, she refused to answer either helm or canvas. Vastly astounded at this, Dale leaped from the binnacle; but his legs refused to support him, and he fell heavily to the deck. His followers sprang to his aid; and it was found that the lieutenant had been severely wounded in the leg by a splinter, but had fought out the battle without ever noticing his hurt.

So ended this memorable battle. But the feelings of pride and exultation so natural to a victor died away in the breast of the American captain as he looked about the scene of wreck and carnage. On all

sides lay the mutilated bodies of the gallant fellows who had so bravely stood to their guns amid the storm of death-dealing missiles. There they lay, piled one on top of the other, — some with their agonized writhings caught and fixed by death; others calm and peaceful, as though sleeping. Powder-boys, young and tender, lay by the side of grizzled old seamen. Words cannot picture the scene. In his journal Capt. Jones wrote: —

"A person must have been an eye-witness to form a just idea of the tremendous scene of carnage, wreck, and ruin that everywhere appeared. Humanity cannot but recoil from the prospect of such finished horror, and lament that war should produce such fatal consequences."

But worse than the appearance of the main deck was the scene in the cockpit and along the gun-deck, which had been converted into a temporary hospital. Here lay the wounded, ranged in rows along the deck. Moans and shrieks of agony were heard on every side. The surgeons were busy with their glittering instruments. The tramp of men on the decks overhead, and the creaking of the timbers of the water-logged ship, added to the cries of the wounded, made a perfect bedlam of the place.

It did not take long to discover that the "Bon Homme Richard" was a complete wreck, and in a sinking condition. The gallant old craft had kept afloat while the battle was being fought; but now, that the victory had remained with her, she had given up the struggle against the steadily encroaching waves. The carpenters who had explored the hold came on deck with long faces, and reported that nothing could be done to stop the great holes made by the shot of the "Serapis." Therefore Jones determined to remove his crew and all the wounded to the "Serapis," and abandon the noble "Richard" to her fate. Accordingly, all available hands were put at the pumps, and the work of transferring the wounded was begun. Slings were rigged over the side; and the poor shattered bodies were gently lowered into the boats awaiting them, and, on reaching the "Serapis," were placed tenderly in cots ranged along the main deck. All night the work went on;

and by ten o'clock the next morning there were left on the "Richard" only a few sailors, who alternately worked at the pumps, and fought the steadily encroaching flames.

For Jones did not intend to desert the good old ship without a struggle to save her, even though both fire and water were warring against her. Not until the morning dawned did the Americans fully appreciate how shattered was the hulk that stood between them and a watery grave. Fenimore Cooper, the pioneer historian of the United States navy, writes : —

"When the day dawned, an examination was made into the situation of the 'Richard.' Abaft on a line with those guns of the 'Serapis' that had not been disabled by the explosion, the timbers were found to be nearly all beaten in, or beaten out, — for in this respect there was little difference between the two sides of the ship, — and it was said that her poop and upper decks would have fallen into the gun-room, but for a few buttocks that had been missed. Indeed, so large was the vacuum, that most of the shot fired from this part of the 'Serapis,' at the close of the action, must have gone through the 'Richard' without touching any thing. The rudder was cut from the stern post, and the transoms were nearly driven out of her. All the after-part of the ship, in particular, that was below the quarter-deck was torn to pieces ; and nothing had saved those stationed on the quarter-deck but the impossibility of sufficiently elevating guns that almost touched their object."

Despite the terribly shattered condition of the ship, her crew worked manfully to save her. But, after fighting the flames and working the pumps all day, they were reluctantly forced to abandon the good ship to her fate. It was nine o'clock at night, that the hopelessness of the task became evident. The "Richard" rolled heavily from side to side. The sea was up to her lower port-holes. At each roll the water gushed through her port-holes, and swashed through the hatchways. At ten o'clock, with a last dying surge, the shattered hulk plunged to her final resting-place, carrying with her the bodies of her dead. They had died the noblest of all deaths, — the death of a patriot killed in doing battle

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SINKING OF THE "BON HOMME RICHARD."

for his country. They receive the grandest of all burials, — the burial of a sailor who follows his ship to her grave, on the hard, white sand, in the calm depths of the ocean.

How many were there that went down with the ship? History does not accurately state. Capt. Jones himself was never able to tell how great was the number of dead upon his ship. The most careful estimate puts the number at forty-two. Of the wounded on the American ship, there were about forty. All these were happily removed from the "Richard" before she sunk.

On the "Serapis" the loss was much greater; but here, too, history is at fault, in that no official returns of the killed and wounded have been preserved. Capt. Jones's estimate, which is probably nearly correct, put the loss of the English ship at about a hundred killed, and an equal number wounded.

The sinking of the "Richard" left the "Serapis" crowded with wounded of both nations, prisoners, and the remnant of the crew of the sunken ship. No time was lost in getting the ship in navigable shape, and in clearing away the traces of the battle. The bodies of the dead were thrown overboard. The decks were scrubbed and sprinkled with hot vinegar. The sound of the hammer and the saw was heard on every hand, as the carpenters stopped the leaks, patched the deck, and rigged new spars in place of those shattered by the "Richard's" fire. All three of the masts had gone by the board. Jury masts were rigged; and with small sails stretched on these the ship beat about the ocean, the plaything of the winds. Her consorts had left her. Landais, seeing no chance to rob Jones of the honor of the victory, had taken the "Alliance" to other waters. The "Pallas" had been victorious in her contest with the "Countess of Scarborough;" and, as soon as the issue of the conflict between the "Bon Homme Richard" and the "Serapis" had become evident, she made off with her prize, intent upon gaining a friendly port. The "Richard," after ten days of drifting, finally ran into Texel, in the north of Holland.

The next year was one of comparative inactivity for Jones. He

enjoyed for a time the praise of all friends of the revolting colonies. He was the lion of Paris. Then came the investigation into the action of Landais at the time of the great battle. Though his course at that time was one of open treachery, inspired by his wish to have Jones strike to the "Serapis," that he might have the honor of capturing both ships, Landais escaped any punishment at the hands of his French compatriots. But he was relieved of the command of the "Alliance," which was given to Jones. Highly incensed at this action, the erratic Frenchman incited the crew of the "Alliance" to open mutiny, and, taking command of the ship himself, left France and sailed for America, leaving Commodore Jones in the lurch. On his arrival at Philadelphia, Landais strove to justify his action by blackening the character of Jones, but failed in this, and was dismissed the service. His actions should be regarded with some charity, for the man was doubtless of unsound mind. His insanity became even more evident after his dismissal from the navy; and from that time, until the time of his death, his eccentricities made him generally regarded as one mentally unsound.

Jones, having lost the "Alliance" by the mutiny of Landais, remained abroad, waiting for another ship. He travelled widely on the Continent, and was lavishly entertained by the rich and noble of every nation. Not until October, 1780, did he again tread the deck of a vessel under his own command.

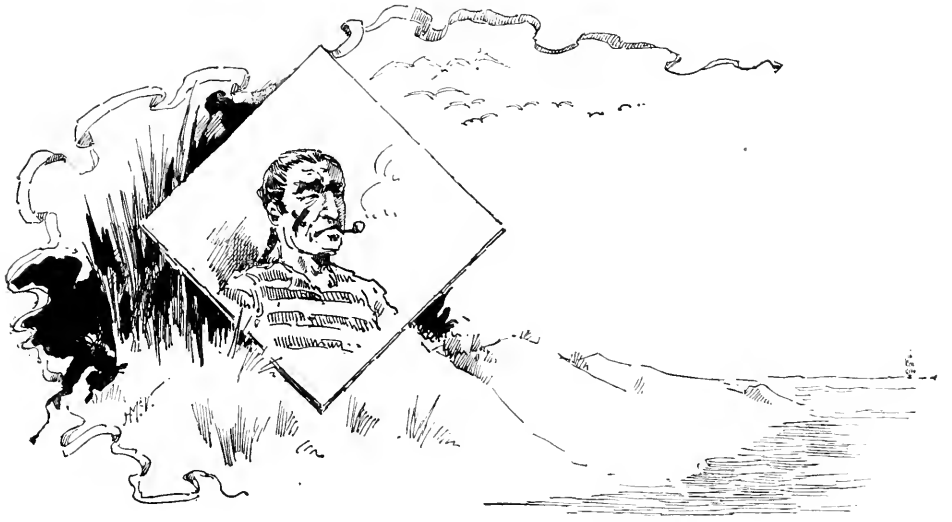
The ship which the French Government finally fitted out and put in command of Paul Jones was the "Ariel," a small twenty-gun ship. This vessel the adventurous sailor packed full of powder and cannon-balls, taking only provisions enough for nine weeks, and evidently expecting to live off the prizes he calculated upon taking. He sailed from l'Orient on a bright October afternoon, under clear skies, and with a fair wind, intending to proceed directly to the coast of America. But the first night out there arose a furious gale. The wind howled through the rigging, tore the sails from the ring-bolts, snapped the spars, and seriously wrecked the cordage of the vessel. The great waves, lashed

into fury by the hurricane, smote against the sides of the little craft as though they would burst through her sheathing. The ship rolled heavily; and the yards, in their grand sweep from side to side, often plunged deep into the foaming waves. At last so great became the strain upon the vessel, that the crew were set to work with axes to cut away the foremast. Balancing themselves upon the tossing, slippery deck, holding fast to a rope with one hand, while with the other they swung the axe, the gallant fellows finally cut so deep into the heart of the stout spar, that a heavy roll of the ship made it snap off short, and it fell alongside, where it hung by the cordage. The wreck was soon cleared away; and as this seemed to ease the ship somewhat, and as she was drifting about near the dreaded rock of Penmarque, the anchors were got out. But in the mean time the violent rolling of the "Ariel" had thrown the heel of the main-mast from the step; and the heavy mast was reeling about, threatening either to plough its way upward through the gun-deck, or to crash through the bottom of the ship. It was determined to cut away this mast; but, before this could be done, it fell, carrying with it the mizzen-mast, and crushing in the deck on which it fell. Thus dismasted, the "Ariel" rode out the gale. All night and all the next day she was tossed about on the angry waters. Her crew thought that their last hour had surely come. Over the shrieking of the gale, and the roaring of the waves, rose that steady, all-pervading sound, which brings horror to the mind of the sailor, — the dull, monotonous thunder of the breakers on the reef of Penmarque. But the "Ariel" was not fated to be ground to pieces on the jagged teeth of the cruel reef. Though she drifted about, the plaything of the winds and the waves, she escaped the jaws of Penmarque. Finally the gale subsided; and, with hastily devised jury-masts, the shattered ship was taken back to l'Orient to refit.

Two months were consumed in the work of getting the shattered vessel ready for sea. When she again set out, she met with no mishap, until, when near the American coast, she fell in with a British vessel to which she gave battle. A sharp action of a quarter of an hour forced the Englishman to strike his colors; but, while the Americans were

preparing to board the prize, she sailed away, vastly to the chagrin and indignation of her would-be captors.

The short cruise of the "Ariel" was the last service rendered by Paul Jones to the American Colonies. On his arrival at Philadelphia, he was dined and fêted to his heart's desire; he received a vote of thanks from Congress; he became the idol of the populace. But the necessities of the struggling colonies were such that they were unable to build for him a proper war-ship, and he remained inactive upon shore until the close of the Revolution, when he went abroad, and took service with Russia. He is the one great character in the naval history of the Revolution. He is the first heroic figure in American naval annals. Not until years after his death did men begin to know him at his true worth. He was too often looked upon as a man of no patriotism, but wholly mercenary; courageous, but only with the daring of a pirate. Not until he had died a lonely death, estranged from the country he had so nobly served, did men come to know Paul Jones as a model naval officer, high-minded in his patriotism, pure in his life, elevated in his sentiments, and as courageous as a lion.



CHAPTER X.

CAREER OF NICHOLAS BIDDLE. — HIS EXPLOIT AT LEWISTON JAIL. — CRUISE IN THE "RANDOLPH." — BATTLE WITH THE "YARMOUTH." — THE FATAL EXPLOSION. — SAMUEL TUCKER. — HIS BOYHOOD. — ENCOUNTER WITH CORSAIRS. — CRUISING IN THE "FRANKLIN." — IN COMMAND OF THE "BOSTON." — ANECDOTES OF CAPT. TUCKER.

IN THE career of Paul Jones is to be found the record of the most stirring events of the Revolution; but there were other commanders in the young American navy no less daring than he. As the chief naval representative of the Colonies who cruised in European waters, Jones achieved a notoriety somewhat out of proportion to his actual achievements. But other brave seamen did gallant service along the Atlantic coast for the cause of the struggling nation, and, by their daring and nautical skill, did much to bring the war of the Revolution to its happy conclusion.

We abandoned our consideration of the general naval events of the war, to turn to a recountal of the exploits of Paul Jones at the close of the year 1776. Hostilities on the water during that year were confined to sharp, but short, actions between small men-of-war or privateers. The Americans

lacked the discipline and experience necessary to win for themselves any great reputation on the water. Though they showed themselves full of dash and spirit, they were deficient in discipline and staying qualities. Nevertheless, the record of the year was by no means discreditable to so young a naval organization.

Aside from the naval operations on the ocean, the year 1776 had seen the thick clouds of gunpowder-smoke floating across the placid surface of Lake Champlain, while the wooded hills that surrounded that lake and Lake George more than once resounded with thunderous tones of cannon. The hostile meetings of the English and Americans on the interior lakes are hardly to be classed as naval engagements. The vessels were chiefly gondolas and galleys, and many of their crews had never seen salt water. On the British side the forces were more considerable. In October, 1776, the British had on Lake Champlain at least one full-rigged ship; and their schooners and galleys were all manned by trained sailors, drafted from men-of-war laid up in the St. Lawrence. This force was under the command of Capt. Douglass of the frigate "Isis." The Americans, on the contrary, had manned their fleet with recruits from the army; and the forces were under the command of an army-officer, Gen. Benedict Arnold, the story of whose later treachery is familiar to every American. It was late in October that the two hostile fleets met in deadly conflict, and a few short hours were enough to prove to the Americans that they were greatly overmatched. Such of their vessels as were not sunk were captured and burned by the enemy; while their crews escaped into the woods, and ultimately rejoined Arnold's army, from which they had been drafted.

We pass thus hastily over the so-called naval operations on Lake Champlain, because they were properly not naval operations at all, but merely incidents in the shore campaign. The fact that a few soldiers hastily build a small flotilla, and with it give battle to an enemy on the water, does not in any sense constitute a naval battle.

The year 1777 witnessed many notable naval events. Hostilities along the seaboard became more lively. New vessels were put into commission. England despatched a larger naval armament to crush her rebellious colo-

nies. The records of the admiralty show, that at the beginning of that year Parliament voted to the navy forty-five thousand men. The Americans were able to array against this huge force only some four thousand, scattered upon thirteen small vessels-of-war.

One of the first ships to get to sea in this year was the "Randolph;" a new frigate commanded by Nicholas Biddle, who thus early in the war had won the confidence of the people and the naval authorities. In command of the little cruiser "Andrea Doria," Biddle had cruised off the coast of Newfoundland in 1776. His success upon that cruise has already been noted.

Biddle was a man possessing to the fullest degree that primary qualification of a good naval officer, — an indomitable will. In illustration of his determination, a story is related concerning an incident that occurred just as the "Andrea Doria" had left the Capes of the Delaware. Two of her crew had deserted, and, being apprehended by the authorities on shore, were lodged in Lewistown jail. But the sheriff and his deputies found it easier to turn the key on the fugitive tars, than to keep them in control while they lay in durance vile. Gathering all the benches, chairs, and tables that lay about the jail, — for the lockup of those days was not the trim affair of steel and iron seen to-day, — the unrepentant jackies built for themselves a barricade, and, snugly entrenched behind it, shouted out bold defiance to any and all who should come to take them. The jail authorities had committed the foolish error of neglecting to disarm the prisoners when they were captured; and, as each had a brace of ugly pistols in his belt, the position of the two behind their barricade was really one of considerable strength. The prison officials dared not attempt to dislodge the warlike tars. The militia company of the town was ordered to the scene, but even this body of soldiery dared not force the prison door. Accordingly they determined to let time do the work, and starve the rogues out of their retreat. At this juncture Capt. Biddle came ashore. He had no intention of letting his trim ship lie idly in the offing while two mutinous blue-jackets were slowly starved into subjection. The "Andrea Doria" needed the men, and there must

be no more delay. A captain in the American navy was not to be defied by two of his own people.

Therefore, seizing a loaded pistol in each hand, Capt. Biddle walked to the prison, accompanied only by a young midshipman. As the two pounded upon the heavy barred door, the crowd outside fell back, expecting the bullets to fly.

"Open this door, Green," shouted Biddle to one of the prisoners, whom he knew by name.

"Try to open it yourself," came the reply from within, with an accompanying oath. "The first man that shows his head inside this door gets a bullet."

Green was known as a bold, desperate man; but Biddle did not hesitate a moment. Ordering the bystanders to break down the door, he waited quietly, until a crash, and the sudden scattering of the crowd, gave notice that the way into the prison was clear. Then gripping his pistols tightly, but with his arms hanging loosely at his sides, he advanced upon the deserters. Behind the barricade stood Green, his eyes blazing with rage, his pistol levelled. Biddle faced him quietly.

"Now, Green, if you don't take a good aim, you are a dead man," said he.

With a muttered curse, the mutineer dropped his weapon. The cool determination of the captain awed him. In a few minutes he, with his companion, was on his way to the ship in irons.

It was in February, 1777, that the stanch new frigate "Randolph," with Biddle in command, set sail from Philadelphia. Hardly had she reached the high seas when a terrific gale set in, from which the "Randolph" emerged, shorn of her tapering masts. As she lay a helpless wreck tossing on the waves, the hard work necessary to put her in decent shape again induced Biddle to accede to the request of a number of British prisoners on board, who wished to be enrolled among the crew of the "Randolph." This proved to be an unfortunate move; for the Englishmen were no sooner enrolled on the ship's list than they began plotting mutiny, and the uprising reached such a stage that

they assembled on the gun-deck, and gave three cheers. But the firm and determined stand of the captain and his officers overawed the mutineers, and they returned to their places after the ringleaders had been made to suffer at the gratings. But the spirit of disaffection rife amid his crew, and the crippled condition of his ship, determined Biddle to proceed forthwith to Charleston to refit.

But a few days were spent in port. Getting to sea again, the "Randolph" fell in with the "True Briton," a twenty-gun ship, flying the British colors. Though the captain of the "True Briton" had often boasted of what he would do should he encounter the "Randolph," his courage then failed him, and he fled. The "Randolph" gave chase, and, proving to be a speedy ship, soon overhauled the prize, which struck without waiting for a volley. Three other vessels that had been cruising with the "True Briton" were also captured, and with her rich prizes the "Randolph" returned proudly to Charleston. Here her usefulness ceased for a time; for a superior force of British men-of-war appeared off the harbor, and by them the "Randolph" was blockaded for the remainder of the season.

Early in 1778 Biddle again took the sea with the "Randolph," supported this time by four small vessels, fitted out by the South Carolina authorities. They were the "Gen. Moultrie," eighteen guns; the "Polly," sixteen; the "Notre Dame," sixteen; and the "Fair American," sixteen. With this force Capt. Biddle set out in search of a British squadron known to be cruising thereabouts, and probably the same vessels that had kept him a prisoner during so much of the previous year.

On the 7th of March, 1778, the lookouts on the smaller vessels saw a signal thrown out from the masthead of the "Randolph," which announced a sail in sight. Chase was at once given; and by four o'clock she was near enough for the Americans to see that she was a large ship, and apparently a man-of-war. About eight o'clock the stranger was near enough the squadron for them to make out that she was a heavy frigate.

The Englishman was not slow to suspect the character of the vessels

with which he had fallen in, and firing a shot across the bows of the "Moultrie," demanded her name.

"The 'Polly' of New York," was the response.

Leaving the "Moultrie" unmolested, the stranger ranged up alongside the "Randolph," and ordered her to show her colors. This Biddle promptly did; and as the American flag went fluttering to the fore, the ports of the "Randolph" were thrown open, and a broadside poured into the hull of the Englishman. The stranger was not slow in replying, and the action became hot and deadly. Capt. Biddle was wounded in the thigh early in the battle. As he fell to the deck, his officers crowded about him, thinking that he was killed; but he encouraged them to return to their posts, and, ordering a chair to be placed on the quarter-deck, remained on deck, giving orders, and cheering on his men. It is said that Capt. Biddle was wounded by a shot from the "Moultrie," which flew wide of its intended mark.

For twenty minutes the battle raged, and there was no sign of weakening on the part of either contestant. Suddenly the sound of the cannonade was deadened by a thunderous roar. The people on the other ships saw a huge column of fire and smoke rise where the "Randolph" had floated. The English vessel was thrown violently on her beam-ends. The sky was darkened with flying timbers and splinters, which fell heavily into the sea. The "Randolph" had blown up. A spark, a red-hot shot, some fiery object, had penetrated her magazine, and she was annihilated.

The horrible accident which destroyed the "Randolph" came near being the end of the "Yarmouth," her antagonist. The two battling ships were close together; so close, in fact, that after the explosion Capt. Morgan of the "Fair American" hailed the "Yarmouth" to ask how Capt. Biddle was. The English ship was fairly covered with bits of the flying wreck. Some heavy pieces of timber falling from the skies badly shattered her main-deck. An American ensign, closely rolled up, fell on her forecastle, not even singed by the fiery ordeal through which it had passed.

PAGE 161.—BLUE JACKETS OF '76.

THE CASTAWAYS.

The "Yarmouth" wasted little time in wonder over the fate of her late antagonist. In all the mass of floating wreckage that covered the sea, there appeared to be no living thing. The four smaller American vessels, dismayed by the fate of their consort, were making good their escape. Without more ado, the "Yarmouth" set out in chase.

Four days later, the Americans having escaped, the "Yarmouth" was again cruising near the scene of the action. A raft was discovered on the ocean, which seemed to support some living creatures. Running down upon it, four wretched, emaciated men were discovered clinging to a piece of wreckage, and wildly waving for assistance. They were taken aboard the British man-of-war, and given food and drink, of both of which they partook greedily; for their sole sustenance during the four days for which they clung to their frail raft was rain-water sucked from a piece of blanket.

So died Capt. Nicholas Biddle, blown to atoms by the explosion of his ship in the midst of battle. Though but a young officer, not having completed his twenty-seventh year, he left an enduring name in the naval annals of his country. Though his service was short, the fame he won was great.

Among the more notable commanders who did good service on the sea was Capt. Samuel Tucker, who was put in command of the frigate "Boston" in the latter part of the year 1777. Tucker was an old and tried seaman, and is furthermore one of the most picturesque figures in the naval history of the Revolution. He first showed his love for the sea in the way that Yankee boys from time immemorial have shown it, — by running away from home, and shipping as a cabin-boy. The ship which he chose was the British sloop-of-war "Royal George," and the boy found himself face to face with the rigid naval discipline of the British service at that time. But he stuck manfully to the career he had chosen, and gradually mastered not only the details of a seaman's duty, but much of the art of navigation; so that when finally he got his discharge from the "Royal George," he shipped as second mate on a Salem merchantman. It was on his first voyage in this capacity that he

first showed the mettle that was in him. Two Algerine corsairs, their decks crowded with men, their long low hulls cleaving the waves like dolphins, had given chase to the merchantman. The captain of the threatened ship grew faint-hearted: he sought courage in liquor, and soon became unable to manage his vessel. Tucker took the helm. He saw that there was no chance of escape in flight, for the corsairs were too fleet. There was no hope of victory in a battle, for the pirates were too strong. But the trim New England schooner minded her helm better than her lanteen-rigged pursuers, and this fact Tucker put to good account.

Putting his helm hard down, he headed the schooner directly for the piratical craft. By skilful manœuvring, he secured such a position that either pirate, by firing upon him, was in danger of firing into his fellow corsair. This position he managed to maintain until nightfall, when he slipped away, and by daylight was snugly at anchor in the port of Lisbon.

For some time after this episode, the record of Tucker's seafaring life is lost. Certain it is that he served in the British navy as an officer for some time, and was master of a merchantman for several years.

When the Revolution broke out, Samuel Tucker was in London. Being offered by a recruiting officer a commission in either the army or navy, if he would consent to serve "his gracious Majesty," Tucker very rashly responded, "Hang his gracious Majesty! Do you think I would serve against my country?"

Soon a hue and cry was out for Tucker. He was charged with treason, and fled into the country to the house of a tavern-keeper whom he knew, who sheltered him until he could make his escape from England.

Hardly had he arrived in America, when Gen. Washington commissioned him captain of the "Franklin," and instructed him to proceed directly to sea. An express with the commission and instructions was hurried off to Marblehead, then a straggling little city. He was instructed to find the "Hon. Samuel Tucker," and to deliver to him the

packets in his charge. When the messenger arrived, Tucker was working in his yard. The messenger saw a rough-looking person, roughly clad, with a tarpaulin hat, and his neck bound with a flaming red bandanna handkerchief. Never once thinking this person could be the man he sought, he leaned from his horse, and shouted out roughly, —

"I say, fellow, I wish you would tell me whether the Hon. Samuel Tucker lives hereabouts."

Tucker looked up with a quizzical smile, and surveyed the speaker from under the wide rim of his tarpaulin, as he answered, —

"Honorable, honorable! There's none of that name in Marblehead. He must be one of the Tuckers in Salem. I'm the only Samuel Tucker here."

"Capt. Glover told me he knew him," responded the messenger, "and described his house, gable-end on the seaside, none near it. Faith, this looks like the very place!"

With a laugh, Tucker then confessed his identity, and asked the messenger his business. Receiving the commission and instructions, he at once began his preparations for leaving home, and at daybreak the next morning was on his way to Beverly, where lay anchored the first ship he was to command in the service of his country.

In the "Franklin" Capt. Tucker did some most efficient work. His name appears constantly in the letters of Gen. Washington, and in the State papers making up the American archives, as having sent in valuable prizes. At one time we read of the capture of "a brigantine from Scotland, worth fifteen thousand pounds sterling;" again, of six gun-boats, and of brigs laden with wine and fruit. During the year 1776, he took not less than thirty — and probably a few more — ships, brigs, and smaller vessels. Nor were all these vessels taken without some sharp fighting.

Of one battle Tucker himself speaks in one of his letters. First telling how his wife made the colors for his ship, "the field of which was white, and the union was green, made of cloth of her own purchasing, and at her own expense," he goes on to write of one of his battles: —

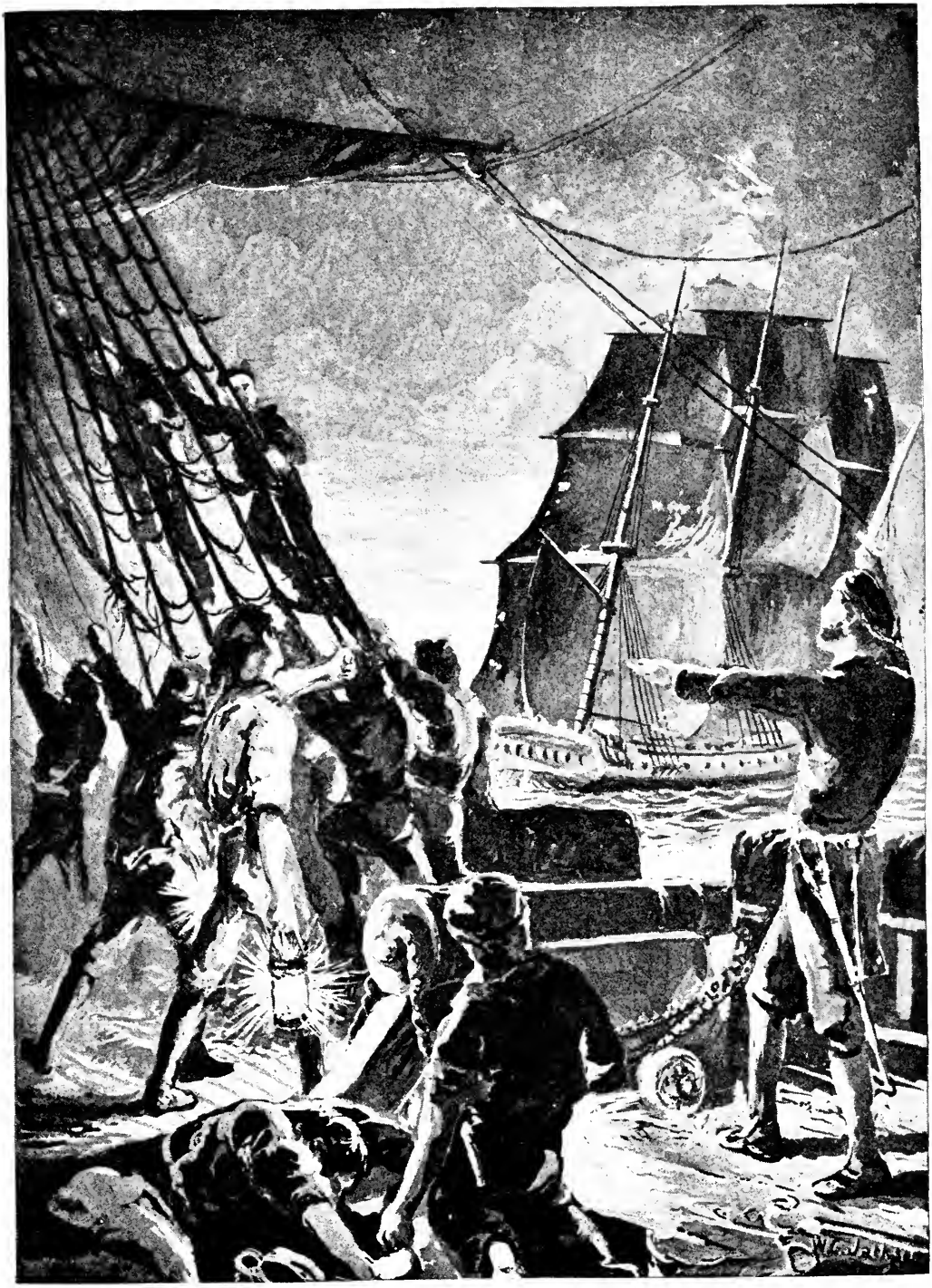
"Those colors I wore in honor of the country, — which has so nobly

rewarded me for my past services, — and the love of their maker, until I fell in with Col. Archibald Campbell in the ship "George," and brig "Arabella," transports with about two hundred and eighty Highland troops on board, of Gen. Frazer's corps. About ten P.M. a severe conflict ensued, which held about two hours and twenty minutes. I conquered them with great carnage on their side, it being in the night, and my small bark, about seventy tons burden, being very low in the water, I received no damage in loss of men, but lost a complete set of new sails by the passing of their balls; then the white field and pine-tree union were riddled to atoms. I was then immediately supplied with a new suit of sails, and a new suit of colors, made of canvas and bunting of my own prize-goods."

Another time, during the same year, Tucker took two British ships near Marblehead. So near was the scene of action to the house of Capt. Tucker, that his wife and her sister, hearing the sound of cannonading, ascended a high hill in the vicinity, and from that point viewed the action through a spy-glass.

Capt. Tucker kept the sea in the "Franklin" until late in the winter. When finally the cold weather and high winds forced him to put his ship out of commission, he went to his home at Marblehead. He remained there but a short time; for in March, 1777, he was put in command of the "Boston," a frigate of twenty-four guns. In this vessel he cruised during the year with varying success.

Feb. 10, 1778, Capt. Tucker was ordered to carry the Hon. John Adams to France, as envoy from the United States. The voyage was full of incidents. Feeling impressed with the gravity of the charge laid upon him, Capt. Tucker chose a course which he hoped would enable him to steer clear of the horde of British men-of-war which then infested the American coast. But in so doing he fell in with a natural enemy, which came near proving fatal. A terrific thunderstorm, gradually growing into a tornado, crossed the path of the ship. The ocean was lashed into waves mountain high. The crash of the thunder rent the sky. A stroke of lightning struck the main-mast, and ripped up the deck, narrowly miss-



PAGE 167.—BLUE JACKETS OF '76.

PERFIDIOUS ESCAPE OF THE "TRIUMPH."

(See page 154.)

ing the magazine. The ship sprung a leak; and the grewsome sound of the pumps mingled with the roar of the waves, and the shrieking of the winds. For several days the stormy weather continued. Then followed a period of calm, which the captain well employed in repairing the rigging, and exercising the men with the guns and small-arms. Many ships had been sighted, and some, evidently men-of-war, had given chase; but the "Boston" succeeded in showing them all a clean pair of heels.

"What would you do," said Mr. Adams one day, as he stood with the captain watching three ships that were making desperate efforts to overhaul the "Boston," "if you could not escape, and they should attack you?"

"As the first is far in advance of the others, I should carry her by boarding, leading the boarders myself," was the response. "I should take her; for no doubt a majority of her crew, being pressed men, would turn to and join me. Having taken her, I should be matched, and could fight the other two."

Such language as this coming from many men would be considered mere foolhardy boasting. But Tucker was a man not given to brag. Indeed, he was apt to be very laconic in speaking of his exploits. A short time after his escape from the three ships, he fell in with an English armed vessel of no small force, and captured her. His only comment on the action in his journal reads, "I fired a gun, and they returned three; and down went the colors."

John Adams, however, told a more graphic story of this capture. Tucker, as soon as he saw an armed vessel in his path, hastily called his crew to order, and bore down upon her. When the roll of the drum, calling the people to quarters, resounded through the ship, Mr. Adams seized a musket, and took his stand with the marines. Capt. Tucker, seeing him there, requested him to go below, and upon his desire being disregarded, put his hand upon the envoy's shoulder, and in a tone of authority said, —

"Mr. Adams, I am commanded by the Continental Congress to deliver you safe in France, and you must go below."

The envoy smilingly complied, and just at that moment the enemy let fly her broadside. The shot flew through the rigging, doing but little

damage. Though the guns of the "Boston" were shotted, and the gunners stood at their posts with smoking match-stocks, Capt. Tucker gave no order to fire, but seemed intent upon the manœuvres of the ships. The eager blue-jackets begun to murmur, and the chorus of questions and oaths was soon so great that the attention of Tucker was attracted. He looked at the row of eager faces on the gun-deck, and shouted out, —

"Hold on, my men! I wish to save that egg without breaking the shell."

Soon after, Tucker brought his broadside to bear on the stern of the enemy, and she struck without more ado. She proved to be an armed ship, the "Martha."

After this encounter, nothing more of moment occurred on the voyage; and the "Boston" reached Bordeaux, and landed her distinguished passenger in safety. Two months later she left Bordeaux, in company with a fleet of twenty sail, one of which was the "Ranger," formerly commanded by Paul Jones. With these vessels he cruised for a time in European waters, but returned to the American coast in the autumn. His services for the rest of that year, and the early part of 1779, we must pass over hastily, though many were the prizes that fell into his clutches.

Many anecdotes are told of Tucker. His shrewdness, originality, and daring made him a favorite theme for story-tellers. But, unhappily, the anecdotes have generally no proof of their truth. One or two, however, told by Capt. Tucker's biographer, Mr. John H. Sheppard, will not be out of place here.

In one the story is told that Tucker fell in with a British frigate which he knew to be sent in search of him. Showing the English flag, he sailed boldly towards the enemy, and in answer to her hail said he was Capt. Gordon of the English navy, out in search of the "Boston," commanded by the rebel Tucker.

"I'll carry him to New York, dead or alive," said Tucker.

"Have you seen him?" was asked.

"Well, I've heard of him," was the response; "and they say he is a hard customer."

All this time Tucker had been manœuvring to secure a raking position. Behind the closed ports of the "Boston," the men stood at their guns, ready for the word of command. Just as the American had secured the position desired, a sailor in the tops of the British vessel cried out, —

"That is surely Tucker; we shall have a devil of a smell directly."

Hearing this, Tucker ordered the American flag hoisted, and the ports thrown open. Hailing his astonished foe, he cried, —

"The time I proposed talking with you is ended. This is the 'Boston,' frigate. I am Samuel Tucker, but no rebel. Fire, or strike your flag."

The Englishman saw he had no alternative but to strike. This he did without firing a gun. The vessel, though not named in the anecdote, was probably the "Pole," of the capture of which Tucker frequently speaks in his letters.

Of the part Tucker played in the siege of Charleston, of his capture there by the British, and of his exchange, we shall speak later. At that disaster four American frigates were lost: so many of the best naval officers were thrown out of employment. Among them was Tucker; but ever anxious for active service, he obtained the sloop-of-war "Thorn," which he himself had captured, and went out as a privateer. In this vessel he saw some sharp service. One engagement was thus described to Mr. Sheppard by a marine named Everett who was on board: —

"We had been cruising about three weeks when we fell in with an English packet of twenty-two guns and one hundred men. Not long after she was discovered, the commodore called up his crew, and said, 'She means to fight us; and if we go alongside like men, she is ours in thirty minutes, but if we can't go as men we have no business here.' He then told them he wanted no cowards on deck, and requested those who were willing to fight to go down the starboard, and those who were unwilling the larboard gangway. Every man and boy took the first, signifying his willingness to meet the enemy.

"As Mr. Everett was passing by, the commodore asked him, —

"'Are you willing to go alongside of her?'

"'Yes, sir,' was the reply.

"In mentioning this conversation, however, Mr. Everett candidly confessed, 'I did not tell him the truth, for I would rather have been in my father's cornfield.'

"After the commanders of these two vessels, as they drew near, had hailed each other in the customary way when ships meet at sea, the captain of the English packet cried out roughly from the quarter-deck, —

"'Haul down your colors, or I'll sink you!'

"'Ay, ay, sir; directly,' answered Tucker calmly. And he then ordered the helmsman to steer the 'Thorn' right under the stern of the packet, luff up under her lee quarters, and range alongside of her. The order was promptly executed. The two vessels were laid side by side, within pistol shot of each other. While the 'Thorn' was getting into position, the enemy fired a full broadside at her which did but little damage. As soon as she was brought completely alongside her adversary, Tucker thundered out to his men to fire, and a tremendous discharge followed; and, as good aim had been taken, a dreadful carnage was seen in that ill-fated vessel. It was rapidly succeeded by a fresh volley of artillery, and in twenty-seven minutes a piercing cry was heard from the English vessel: 'Quarters, for God's sake! Our ship is sinking. Our men are dying of their wounds.'

"To this heart-rending appeal Capt. Tucker exclaimed, —

"'How can you expect quarters while that British flag is flying?'

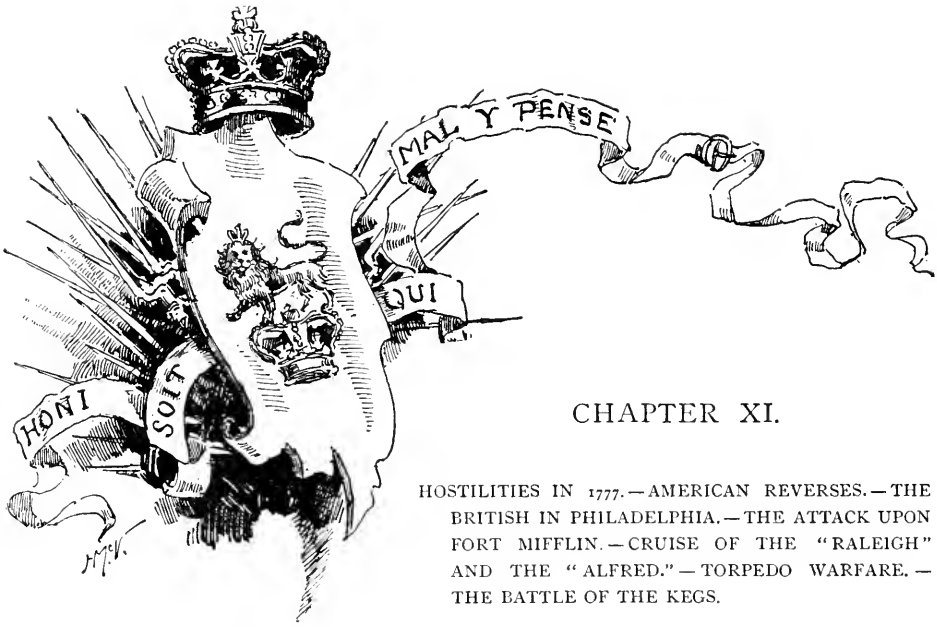
"The sad answer came back, 'Our halliards are shot away.'

"'Then cut away your ensign staff, or ye'll all be dead men.'

"It was done immediately. Down came the colors, the din of cannonading ceased, and only the groans of the wounded and dying were heard.

"Fifteen men, with carpenters, surgeon, and their leader, were quickly on the deck of the prize. Thirty-four of her crew, with her captain, were either killed or wounded. Her decks were besmeared with blood, and in some places it stood in clotted masses to the tops of the sailors' slippers. The gloomy but needful work of amputating limbs, and laying out the dead, was begun; and every effort was made to render the wounded prisoners as comfortable as possible."

Here we must take leave of Commodore Tucker and his exploits. As a privateersman, he continued to do daring work to the end of the war. He fought at least one more bloody action. He was captured once and escaped. But the recountal of his romantic career must now yield to our chronological survey of the lesser naval events of the Revolution.



CHAPTER XI.

HOSTILITIES IN 1777.—AMERICAN REVERSES.—THE BRITISH IN PHILADELPHIA.—THE ATTACK UPON FORT MIFFLIN.—CRUISE OF THE "RALEIGH" AND THE "ALFRED."—TORPEDO WARFARE.—THE BATTLE OF THE KEGS.

WE HAVE now heard of the exploits of some of the chief naval leaders of the war of the Revolution. But there were many dashing engagements in which the great commanders took no part, and many important captures made by vessels sailing under the flags of the individual colonies, which deserve attention.

The American cause on the water suffered some rather severe reverses in the early part of 1777. In March, the brig "Cabot" fell in with the British frigate "Milford," and was so hard pressed that she was run ashore on the coast of Nova Scotia. The crew had hardly time to get ashore before the British took possession of the stranded craft. The Americans were left helpless, in a wild and little settled country, but finally made their way through the woods to a harbor. Here they found a coasting schooner lying at anchor, upon which they promptly seized, and in which they escaped to Portsmouth. In the mean time, the British had got the "Cabot" afloat again.

Two months later, or in the early part of May, two United States vessels, the "Hancock" thirty-two, Capt. Manly, and the "Boston" twenty-four, Capt. Hector McNeil, sailed in company from Boston. When

a few days out, a strange sail was sighted, and proved to be a British frigate. The "Hancock" soon came near enough to her to exchange broadsides, as the two vessels were going on opposite tacks. The enemy, however, seemed anxious to avoid a conflict, and exerted every effort to escape. Manly, having great confidence in the speed of his ship, gave chase. Calling the people from the guns, he bade them make a leisurely breakfast, and get ready for the work before them. The "Hancock" soon overhauled the chase, which began firing her guns as fast as they would bear. The Americans, however, made no response until fairly alongside, when they let fly a broadside with ringing cheers. The action lasted for an hour and a half before the enemy struck. She proved to be the "Fox," twenty-eight. She was badly cut up by the American fire, and had thirty-two dead and wounded men on board. The loss on the "Hancock" amounted to only eight men. In this running fight the "Boston" was hopelessly distanced, coming up just in time to fire a gun as the British ensign came fluttering from the peak.

Putting a prize crew on the "Fox," the three vessels continued their cruise. A week passed, and no sail was seen. Somewhat rashly Capt. Manly turned his ship's prow toward Halifax, then, as now, the chief British naval station on the American coast. When the three ships appeared off the entrance to the harbor of Halifax, the British men-of-war inside quickly spied them, raised anchor, and came crowding out in hot pursuit. There was the "Rainbow" forty-four, the "Flora" thirty-two, and the "Victor" eighteen, besides two others whose names could not be ascertained. The Americans saw that they had stirred up a nest of hornets, and sought safety in flight. The three British vessels whose names are given gave chase. The "Boston," by her swift sailing, easily kept out of the reach of the enemy. The "Fox," however, was quickly overhauled by the "Flora," and struck her flag after exchanging a few broadsides. The "Hancock" for a time seemed likely to escape, but at last the "Rainbow" began gradually to overhaul her. Capt. Manly, finding escape impossible, began manœuvring with the intention of boarding his powerful adversary; but the light winds made this impossible, and

he suddenly found himself under the guns of the "Rainbow," with the "Victor" astern, in a raking position. Seeing no hope for success in so unequal a conflict, Manly struck his flag. In the mean time the "Boston" had calmly proceeded upon her way, leaving her consorts to their fate. For having thus abandoned his superior officer, Capt. McNeil was dismissed the service upon his return to Boston.

These losses were to some degree offset by the good fortune of the "Trumbull," twenty-eight, in command of Capt. Saltonstall. She left New York in April of this year, and had been on the water but a few days when she fell in with two British armed vessels of no inconsiderable force. The Englishmen, confident of their ability to beat off the cruiser, made no effort to avoid a conflict. Capt. Saltonstall, by good seamanship, managed to put his vessel between the two hostile ships, and then worked both batteries with such vigor, that, after half-an-hour's fighting, the enemy was glad to strike. In this action the Americans lost seven men killed, and eight wounded. The loss of the enemy was not reported. This capture was of the greatest importance to the American cause, for the two prizes were loaded with military and naval stores.

During the year 1777, the occupation of Philadelphia by the British army, under Gen. Howe, led to some activity on the part of the American navy. While Philadelphia had been in the possession of the Continentals, it had been a favorite naval rendezvous. Into the broad channel of the Delaware the American cruisers had been accustomed to retreat when the British naval force along the coast became threateningly active. At the broad wharves of Philadelphia, the men-of-war laid up to have necessary repairs made. In the rope-walks of the town, the cordage for the gallant Yankee ships was spun. In the busy shipyards along the Delaware, many of the frigates, provided for by the Act of 1775, were built.

In the summer of 1777 all this was changed. Sir William Howe, at the head of an irresistible army, marched upon Philadelphia; and, defeating the American army at Brandywine, entered the city in triumph. The privateers and men-of-war scattered hastily, to avoid capture. Most of them

fled down the Delaware; but a few, chiefly vessels still uncompleted, ascended the river.

To cut off these vessels, the British immediately commenced the erection of batteries to command the channel of the river, and prevent any communication between the American vessels above and below Philadelphia. To check the erection of these batteries, the American vessels "Delaware" twenty-four, and "Andrea Doria" fourteen, together with one or two vessels flying the Pennsylvania flag, took up a position before the incomplete earthworks, and opened a heavy fire upon the soldiers employed in the trenches. So accurate was the aim of the American gunners, that work on the batteries was stopped. But, unluckily, the commander of the "Delaware," Capt. Alexander, had failed to reckon on the swift outflowing of the tide; and just as the sailors on that ship were becoming jubilant over the prospect of a victory, a mighty quiver throughout the ship told that she had been left on a shoal by the ebb tide. The enemy was not long in discovering the helpless condition of the "Delaware;" and field-pieces and siege-guns were brought down to the river-bank, until the luckless Americans saw themselves commanded by a heavy battery. In this unhappy predicament there was no course remaining but to strike their flag.

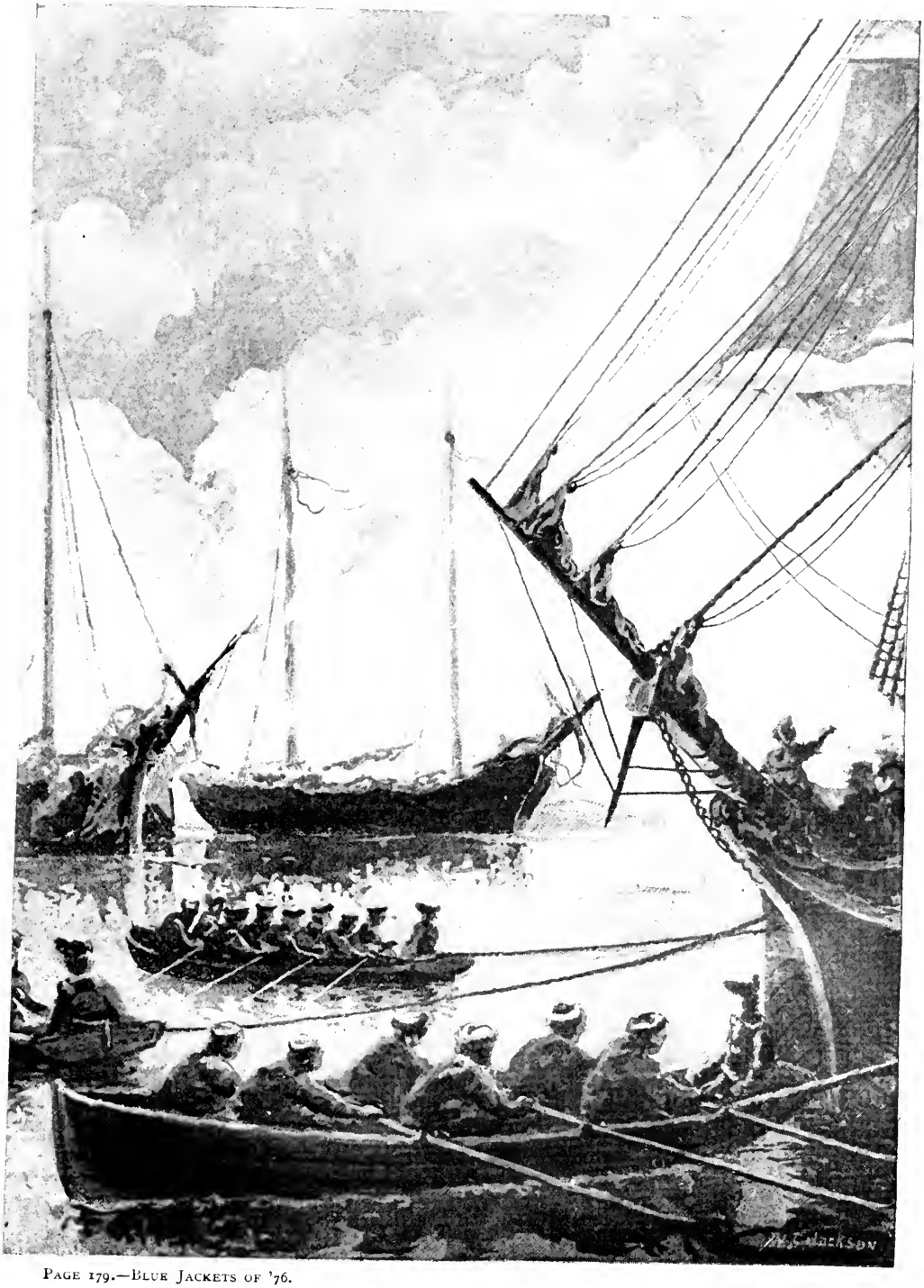
Though the British had possession of Philadelphia, and virtually controlled the navigation of the river at that point, the Americans still held powerful positions at Red Bank and at Fort Mifflin, lower down the river. Against the former post the British sent an unsuccessful land expedition of Hessians, but against Fort Mifflin a naval expedition was despatched.

Fort Mifflin was built on a low marshy island near the mouth of the Schuylkill. Its very situation, surrounded as it was by mud and water, made it impregnable to any land attack. While the fort itself was a fairly strong earthwork, laid out upon approved principles of engineering, its outer works of defence added greatly to its strength. In the main channels of the river were sunk heavy, sharp-pointed *chevaux de frise*, or submarine palisades, with sharp points extending just above the surface of the water.

In addition to this obstacle, the enemy advancing by water upon the fort would have to meet the American flotilla, which, though composed of small craft only, was large enough to prove very annoying to an enemy. In this flotilla were thirteen galleys, one carrying a thirty-two pounder, and the rest with varying weight of ordnance; twenty-six half-galleys, each carrying a four-pounder; two xebecs, each with two twenty-four-pounders in the bow, two eighteen-pounders in the stern, and four nine-pounders in the waist; two floating batteries, fourteen fire-ships, one schooner-galley, one brig-galley, one provincial ship, and the brig "Andrea Doria." It was no small naval force that the British had to overcome before attacking the mud ramparts and bastions of Fort Mifflin.

Against this armament the British brought a number of vessels, with the "Augusta," sixty-four, in the lead. The battle was begun late in the afternoon of the 22d of October, 1777. The attack of the Hessians upon the American fortifications at Red Bank, and the opening of the action between the British and American fleets, were simultaneous. The Hessians were beaten back with heavy loss, some of the American vessels opening fire upon them from the river. The naval battle lasted but a short time that night, owing to the darkness. When the battle ended for the night, the "Augusta," and the "Merlin," sloop-of-war, were left hard and fast aground.

The next morning the British advanced again to the attack. The skirmish of the night before had shown them that the Yankee flotilla was no mean adversary; and they now brought up re-inforcements, in the shape of the "Roebuck" forty-four, "Isis" thirty-two, "Pearl" thirty-two, and "Liverpool" twenty-eight. No sooner had the British squadron come within range than a heavy fire was opened upon the fort. The American flotilla was prompt to answer the challenge, and soon the action became general. Time and time again the Americans sent huge fire-ships, their well-tarred spars and rigging blazing fiercely, down among the enemy. But the skill and activity of the British sailors warded off this danger. Thereupon the Americans, seeing that they could not rely upon their fire-ships, changed their plan of action. Any one of the British



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FIRE SHIPS.

vessels was more than a match for the largest American craft, so the Yankees saw they must rely upon force of numbers. Accordingly their larger vessels were each assigned to attack one of the enemy; while the swift-sailing galleys plied to and fro in the battle, lending aid where needed, and striking a blow wherever the opportunity offered itself. This course of action soon began to tell upon the British. All of their vessels began to show the effects of the American fire. The "Augusta" was in flames, owing to some pressed hay that had been packed upon her quarter having been set on fire. Despite the efforts of her crew, the flames spread rapidly. Seeing no chance to save the vessel, the crew abandoned her, and sought to gain the protection of other vessels of the British fleet. But the other ships, seeing the flames on the "Augusta" drawing closer and closer to the magazine, and knowing that her explosion in that narrow and crowded channel would work dreadful damage among them, determined to abandon the attack upon Fort Mifflin, and withdrew. The "Merlin," which was hard and fast aground, was fired, and the British fled. As they turned their ships' prows down the Delaware, the dull sullen roar of an explosion told that the "Augusta" had met her end. Soon after the "Merlin" blew up, and the defeat of the British was complete.

But, though worsted in this attack upon Fort Mifflin, the British did not wholly abandon their designs upon it. Immediately upon their repulse, they began their preparations for a second attack. This time they did not propose to rely upon men-of-war alone. Batteries were built upon every point of land within range of Fort Mifflin. Floating batteries were built, and towed into position. By the 10th of November all was ready, and upon that day a tremendous cannonade was opened upon the American works. After two days of ceaseless bombardment, the garrison of the fort was forced to surrender. Since the fall of Fort Mifflin gave the control of the Delaware to the British, the Americans immediately put the torch to the "Andrea Doria" fourteen, the "Wasp" eight, and the "Hornet" ten; while the galleys skulked away along the Jersey coast, in search of places of retreat.

While the Yankee tars on river and harbor duty were thus getting their share of fighting, there was plenty of daring work being done on the high seas. One of the most important cruises of the year was that of the "Raleigh" and the "Alfred." The "Raleigh" was one of the twelve-pounder frigates built under the naval Act of 1775. With her consort the "Alfred," she left the American coast in the summer of 1777, bound for France, in search of naval stores that were there awaiting transportation to the United States. Both vessels were short-handed.

On the 2d of September the two vessels overhauled and captured the snow "Nancy," from England, bound for the West Indies. Her captain reported that he had sailed from the West Indies with a fleet of sixty merchantmen, under the convoy of four small men-of-war, the "Camel," the "Druid," the "Weasel," and the "Grasshopper." The poor sailing qualities of the "Nancy" had forced her to drop behind, and the fleet was then about a day in advance of her.

Crowding on all canvas, the two American ships set out in hot pursuit. From the captain of the "Nancy" Capt. Thompson of the "Raleigh" had obtained all the signals in use in the fleet of Indiamen. The next morning the fleet was made out; and the "Raleigh" and the "Alfred" exchanged signals, as though they were part of the convoy. They hung about the outskirts of the fleet until dark, planning, when the night should fall, to make a dash into the enemy's midst, and cut out the chief armed vessel.

But at nightfall the wind changed, so that the plan of the Americans was defeated. At daylight, however, the wind veered round and freshened, so that the "Raleigh," crowding on more sail, was soon in the very centre of the enemy's fleet. The "Alfred," unfortunately, being unable to carry so great a spread of canvas, was left behind; and the "Raleigh" remained to carry out alone her daring adventure.

The "Raleigh" boldly steered straight into the midst of the British merchantmen, exchanging signals with some, and hailing others. Her ports were lowered, and her guns on deck housed, so that there appeared

about her nothing to indicate her true character. Having cruised about amid the merchantmen, she drew up alongside the nearest man-of-war, and when within pistol-shot, suddenly ran up her flag, threw open her ports, and commanded the enemy to strike.

All was confusion on board the British vessel. Her officers had never for a moment suspected the "Raleigh" of being other than one of their own fleet. While they stood aghast, not even keeping the vessel on her course, the "Raleigh" poured in a broadside. The British responded faintly with a few guns. Deliberately the Americans let fly another broadside, which did great execution. The enemy were driven from their guns, but doggedly refused to strike, holding out, doubtless, in the hope that the cannonade might draw to their assistance some of the other armed ships accompanying the fleet.

While the unequal combat was raging, a heavy squall came rushing over the water. The driving sheets of rain shut in the combatants, and only by the thunders of the cannonade could the other vessels tell that a battle was being fought in their midst.

When the squall had passed by, the affrighted merchantmen were seen scudding in every direction, like a school of flying-fish into whose midst some rapacious shark or dolphin has intruded himself. But the three men-of-war, with several armed West-Indiamen in their wake, were fast bearing down upon the combatants, with the obvious intention of rescuing their comrade, and punishing the audacious Yankee.

The odds against Thompson were too great; and after staying by his adversary until the last possible moment, and pouring broadside after broadside into her, he abandoned the fight and rejoined the "Alfred." The two ships hung on the flanks of the fleet for some days, in the hopes of enticing two of the men-of-war out to join in battle. But all was to no avail, and the Americans were forced to content themselves with the scant glory won in the incomplete action of the "Raleigh." Her adversary proved to be the "Druid," twenty, which suffered severely from the "Raleigh's" repeated broadsides, having six killed, and twenty-six wounded; of the wounded, five died immediately after the battle.

It was during the year 1777 that occurred the first attempt to use gunpowder in the shape of a submarine torpedo. This device, which to-day threatens to overturn all established ideas of naval organization and architecture, originated with a clever Connecticut mechanic named David Bushnell. His invention covered not only submarine torpedoes, to be launched against a vessel, but a submarine boat in which an adventurous navigator might undertake to go beneath the hull of a man-of-war, and affix the torpedoes, so that failure should be impossible. This boat in shape was not unlike a turtle. A system of valves, air-pumps, and ballast enabled the operator to ascend or descend in the water at will. A screw-propeller afforded means of propulsion, and phosphorescent gauges and compasses enabled him to steer with some accuracy.

Preliminary tests made with this craft were uniformly successful. After a skilled operator had been obtained, the boat perfectly discharged the duties required of her. But, as is so often the case, when the time for action came she proved inadequate to the emergency. Let her inventor tell the story in his own words: —

"After various attempts to find an operator to my wish, I sent one, who appeared to be more expert than the rest, from New York, to a fifty-gun ship, lying not far from Governor's Island. He went under the ship, and attempted to fix the wooden screw to her bottom, but struck, as he supposes, a bar of iron, which passes from the rudder hinge, and is spiked under the ship's quarter. Had he moved a few inches, which he might have done without rowing, I have no doubt he would have found wood where he might have fixed the screw; or, if the ship were sheathed with copper, he might easily have pierced it. But not being well skilled in the management of the vessel, in attempting to move to another place, he lost the ship. After seeking her in vain for some time, he rowed some distance, and rose to the surface of the water, but found daylight had advanced so far that he durst not renew the attempt. He says that he could easily have fastened the magazine under the stern of the ship above water, as he rowed up to the stern and touched it before he descended. Had he fastened it there, the explosion of a

hundred and fifty pounds of powder (the quantity contained in the magazine) must have been fatal to the ship. In his return from the ship to New York, he passed near Governor's Island, and thought he was discovered by the enemy on the island. Being in haste to avoid the danger he feared, he cast off the magazine, as he imagined it retarded him in the swell, which was very considerable. After the magazine had been cast off one hour, the time the internal apparatus was set to run, it blew up with great violence.

"Afterwards there were two attempts made in Hudson's River, above the city; but they effected nothing. One of them was by the aforementioned person. In going toward the ship, he lost sight of her, and went a great distance beyond her. When he at length found her, the tide ran so strong, that, as he descended under water, for the ship's bottom, it swept him away. Soon after this, the enemy went up the river, and pursued the boat which had the submarine vessel on board, and sunk it with their shot."

So it appears, that, so far as this submarine vessel was concerned, Bushnell's great invention came to naught. And, indeed, it was but the first of a long line of experiments which have been terribly costly in human life, and which as yet have not been brought to a successful end. In every war there comes forward the inventor with the submarine boat, and he always finds a few brave men ready to risk their lives in the floating coffin. Somewhere in Charleston Harbor to-day lies a submarine boat, enclosing the skeletons of eight men, who went out in it to break the blockade of the port during the civil war. And although there are to-day several types of submarine boat, each of which is claimed to make practicable the navigation of the ocean's depths, yet it is doubtful whether any of them are much safer than Bushnell's primitive "turtle."

But Bushnell's experiments in torpedo warfare were not confined to attempts to destroy hostile vessels by means of his submarine vessel. He made several attacks upon the enemy by means of automatic torpedoes, none of which met with complete success. One of these attacks,

made at Philadelphia in December, 1777, furnished the incident upon which is founded the well-known ballad of the "Battle of the Kegs."

It was at a time when the Delaware was filled with British shipping, that Bushnell set adrift upon its swift-flowing tide a number of small kegs, filled with gunpowder, and provided with percussion apparatus, so that contact with any object would explode them. The kegs were started on their voyage at night. But Bushnell had miscalculated the distance they had to travel; so that, instead of reaching the British fleet under cover of darkness, they arrived early in the morning. Great was the wonder of the British sentries, on ship and shore, to see the broad bosom of the river dotted with floating kegs. As the author of the satirical ballad describes it, —

"'Twas early day, as poets say,
Just as the sun was rising;
A soldier stood on a log of wood
And saw the sun a-rising.

As in amaze he stood to gaze
(The truth can't be denied, sir),
He spied a score of kegs, or more,
Come floating down the tide, sir.

A sailor, too, in jerkin blue,
The strange appearance viewing,
First d——d his eyes in great surprise,
Then said, 'Some mischief's brewing.'

These kegs, I'm told, the rebels hold,
Packed up like pickled herring;
And they've come down to attack the town
In this new way of ferrying."

The curiosity of the British at this inexplicable spectacle gave place to alarm, when one of the kegs, being picked up, blew up a boat, and

seriously injured the man whose curiosity had led him to examine it too closely. Half panic-stricken, the British got out their guns, great and small; and all day every small object on the Delaware was the target for a lively fusillade.

"The cannons roar from shore to shore,
The small arms loud did rattle.
Since wars began, I'm sure no man
E'er saw so strange a battle.

The fish below swam to and fro,
Attacked from every quarter.
'Why sure' (thought they), 'the devil's to pay,
'Mong folk above the water.'"

But in the end the kegs all floated by the city, and only the ammunition stores of the British suffered from the attack.

Another attempt was made by Bushnell to destroy the British frigate "Cerberus," lying at anchor off the Connecticut coast. A torpedo, with the usual percussion apparatus, was drawn along the side of the frigate by a long line, but fouled with a schooner lying astern. The explosion occurred with frightful force, and the schooner was wholly demolished. Three men who were on board of her were blown to pieces; and a fourth was thrown high into the air, and was picked out of the water in an almost dying condition.

These experiments of the Connecticut mechanic in the Revolutionary war were the forerunner of a movement which took almost a hundred years to become generally accepted. We have been accustomed to say that Ericsson's armor-clad monitor revolutionized naval warfare; but the perfection of the torpedo is forcing the armor-clad ships into disuse, as they in their day thrust aside the old wooden frigates. The wise nation to-day, seeing how irresistible is the power of the torpedo, is abandoning the construction of cumbrous iron-clads, and building light, swift cruisers, that by speed and easy steering can avoid the submarine

enemy. And if the torpedo cannot be said to be the ideal weapon of chivalric warfare, it may at least in time be credited with doing away with the custom of cooping men up in wrought-iron boxes, to fight with machine guns. Farragut, who hated iron-clads, liked torpedoes little better; but had he foreseen their effects upon naval tactics, he might have hailed them as the destroyers of the iron-clad ships.

CHAPTER XII.

NAVAL EVENTS OF 1778. — RECRUITING FOR THE NAVY. — THE DESCENT UPON NEW PROVIDENCE. — OPERATIONS ON THE DELAWARE. — CAPT. BARRY'S EXPLOITS. — DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN FRIGATES. — AMERICAN REVERSES. — THE CAPTURE OF THE "PIGOT." — FRENCH NAVAL EXPLOITS.

THE year 1778 opened with the brightest prospects for the American cause. The notable success of the American arms on land, and particularly the surrender of Burgoyne, had favorably disposed France toward an alliance with the United States; and, in fact, this alliance was soon formed. Furthermore, the evidence of the prowess of the Americans on shore had stirred up the naval authorities to vigorous action, and it was determined to make the year 1778 a notable one upon the ocean.

Much difficulty was found, at the very outset, in getting men to ship for service on the regular cruisers. Privateers were being fitted out in every port; and on them the life was easy, discipline slack, danger to life small, and the prospects for financial reward far greater than on the United States men-of-war. Accordingly, the seafaring men as a rule

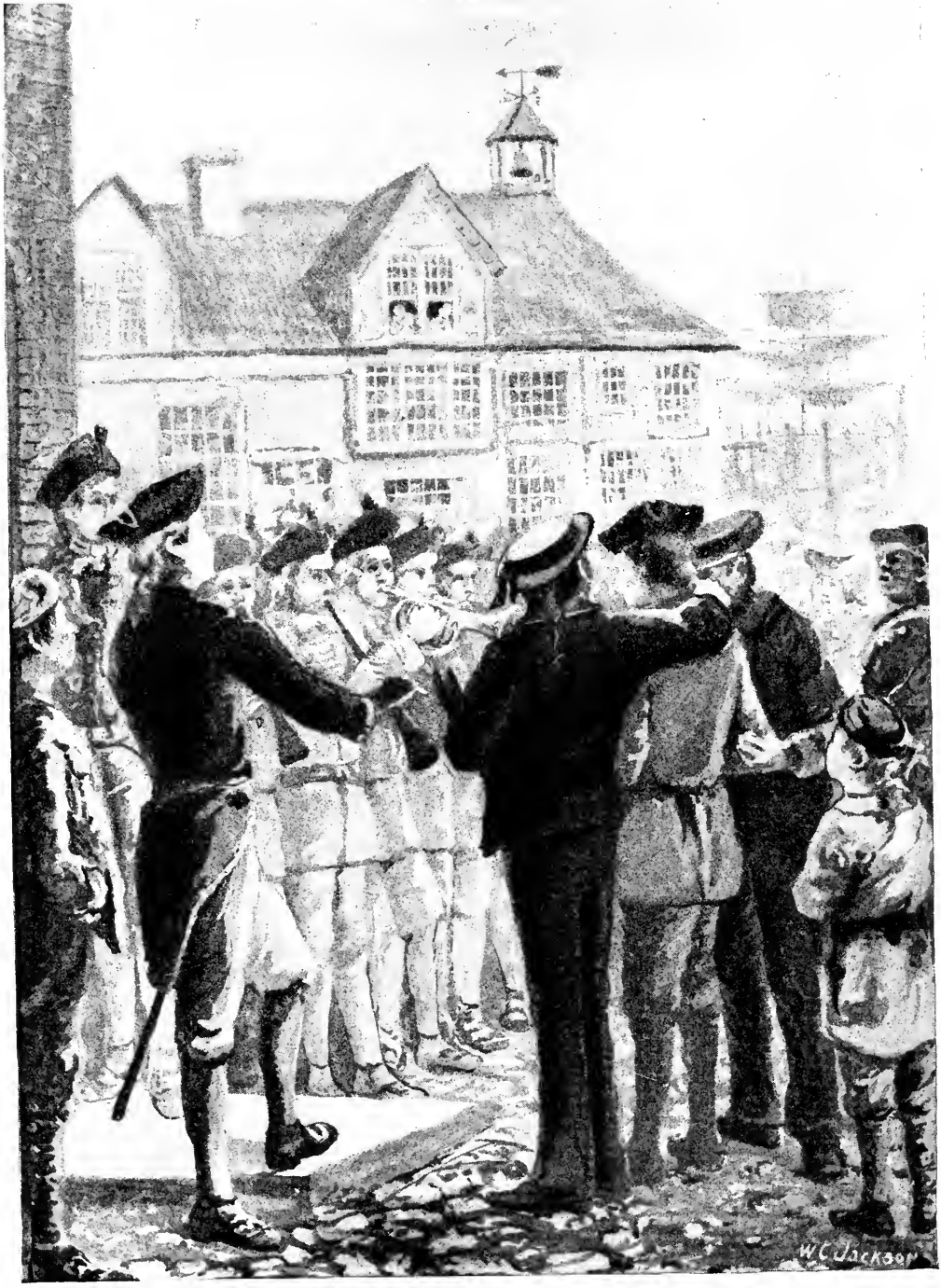
preferred to ship on the privateers. At no time in the history of the United States has the barbaric British custom of getting sailors for the navy by means of the "press-gang" been followed. American blue-jackets have never been impressed by force. It is unfortunately true that unfair advantages have been taken of their simplicity, and sometimes they have even been shipped while under the influence of liquor; but such cases have been rare. It is safe to say that few men have ever trod the deck of a United States man-of-war, as members of the crew, without being there of their own free will and accord.

But in 1777 it was sometimes hard to fill the ships' rosters. Then the ingenuity of the recruiting officers was called into play. A sailor who served on the "Protector" during the Revolution thus tells the story of his enlistment: —

"All means were resorted to which ingenuity could devise to induce men to enlist. A recruiting officer, bearing a flag, and attended by a band of martial music, paraded the streets, to excite a thirst for glory and a spirit of military ambition. The recruiting officer possessed the qualifications necessary to make the service appear alluring, especially to the young. He was a jovial, good-natured fellow, of ready wit and much broad humor. When he espied any large boys among the idle crowd around him, he would attract their attention by singing in a comical manner the following doggerel, —

'All you that have bad masters,
And cannot get your due,
Come, come, my brave boys,
And join our ship's crew.'

"A shout and a huzza would follow, and some would join in the ranks. My excitable feelings were aroused. I repaired to the rendezvous, signed the ship's papers, mounted a cockade, and was, in my own estimation, already more than half a sailor. Appeals continued to be made to the patriotism of every young man, to lend his aid, by his exertions on sea or land, to free his country from the common enemy.



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RECRUITING FOR THE NAVY.

About the last of February the ship was ready to receive her crew, and was hauled off into the channel, that the sailors might have no opportunity to run away after they were got on board. Upward of three hundred and thirty men were carried, dragged, and driven on board, of all kinds, ages, and descriptions, in all the various stages of intoxication, from that of sober tipsiness to beastly drunkenness, with an uproar and clamor that may be more easily imagined than described."

But, whatever the methods adopted to secure recruits for the navy, the men thus obtained did admirable service; and in no year did they win more glory than in 1778.

As usual the year's operations were opened by an exploit of one of the smaller cruisers. This was the United States sloop-of-war "Providence," a trig little vessel, mounting only twelve four-pounders, and carrying a crew of but fifty men. But she was in command of a daring seaman Capt. Rathburne, and she opened the year's hostilities with an exploit worthy of Paul Jones.

Off the south-eastern coast of Florida, in that archipelago or collection of groups of islands known collectively as the West Indies, lies the small island of New Providence. Here in 1778 was a small British colony. The well-protected harbor, and the convenient location of the island, made it a favorite place for the rendezvous of British naval vessels. Indeed, it bid fair to become, what Nassau is to-day, the chief British naval station on the American coast. In 1778 the little seaport had a population of about one thousand people.

With his little vessel, and her puny battery of four-pounders, Capt. Rathburne determined to undertake the capture of New Providence. Only the highest daring, approaching even recklessness, could have conceived such a plan. The harbor was defended by a fort of no mean power. There was always one British armed vessel, and often more, lying at anchor under the guns of the fort. Two hundred of the people of the town were able-bodied men, able to bear arms. How, then, were the Yankees, with their puny force, to hope for success? This query Rathburne answered, "By dash and daring."

It was about eleven o'clock on the night of the 27th of January, 1778, that the "Providence" cast anchor in a sheltered cove near the entrance to the harbor of New Providence. Twenty-five of her crew were put ashore, and being re-enforced by a few American prisoners kept upon the island, made a descent upon Fort Nassau from its landward side. The sentries dozing at their posts were easily overpowered, and the garrison was aroused from its peaceful slumbers by the cheers of the Yankee blue-jackets as they came tumbling in over the ramparts. A rocket sent up from the fort announced the victory to the "Providence," and she came in and cast anchor near the fort.

When morning broke, the Americans saw a large sixteen-gun ship lying at anchor in the harbor, together with five sail that looked suspiciously like captured American merchantmen. The proceedings of the night had been quietly carried on, and the crew of the armed vessel had no reason to suspect that the condition of affairs on shore had been changed in any way during the night. But at daybreak a boat carrying four men put off from the shore, and made for the armed ship; and at the same time a flag was flung out from the flag-staff of the fort, — not the familiar scarlet flag of Great Britain, but the almost unknown stars and stripes of the United States.

The sleepy sailors on the armed vessel rubbed their eyes; and while they were staring at the strange piece of bunting, there came a hail from a boat alongside, and an American officer clambered over the rail. He curtly told the captain of the privateer that the fort was in the hands of the Americans, and called upon him to surrender his vessel forthwith. Resistance was useless; for the heavy guns of Fort Nassau were trained upon the British ship, and could blow her out of the water. The visitor's arguments proved to be unanswerable; and the captain of the privateer surrendered his vessel, which was taken possession of by the Americans; while her crew of forty-five men was ordered into confinement in the dungeons of the fort which had so lately held captive Americans. Other boarding parties were then sent to the other vessels in the harbor, which proved to be American craft, captured by the British sloop-of-war "Grayton."

At sunrise the sleeping town showed signs of reviving life, and a party of the audacious Yankees marched down to the house of the governor. That functionary was found in bed, and in profound ignorance of the events of the night. The Americans broke the news to him none too gently, and demanded the keys of a disused fortress on the opposite side of the harbor from Fort Nassau. For a time the governor was inclined to demur; but the determined attitude of the Americans soon persuaded him that he was a prisoner, though in his own house, and he delivered the keys. Thereupon the Americans marched through the streets of the city, around the harbor's edge to the fort, spiked the guns, and carrying with them the powder and small-arms, marched back to Fort Nassau.

But by this time it was ten o'clock, and the whole town was aroused. The streets were crowded with people eagerly discussing the invasion. The timid ones were busily packing up their goods to fly into the country; while the braver ones were hunting for weapons, and organizing for an attack upon the fort held by the Americans. Fearing an outbreak, Capt. Rathburne sent out a flag of truce, making proclamation to all the inhabitants of New Providence, that the Americans would do no damage to the persons or property of the people of the island unless compelled so to do in self-defence. This pacified the more temperate of the inhabitants; but the hotheads, to the number of about two hundred, assembled before Fort Nassau, and threatened to attack it. But, when they summoned Rathburne to surrender, that officer leaped upon the parapet, and coolly told the assailants to come on.

"We can beat you back easily," said he. "And, by the Eternal, if you fire a gun at us, we'll turn the guns of the fort on your town, and lay it in ruins."

This bold defiance disconcerted the enemy; and, after some consultation among themselves, they dispersed.

About noon that day, the British sloop-of-war "Grayton" made her appearance, and stood boldly into the harbor where lay the "Providence." The United States colors were quickly hauled down from the fort flag-

staff, and every means was taken to conceal the true state of affairs from the enemy. But the inhabitants along the waterside, by means of constant signalling and shouting, at last aroused the suspicion of her officers; and she hastily put about, and scudded for the open sea. The guns at Fort Nassau opened on her as she passed, and the aim of the Yankee gunners was accurate enough to make the splinters fly. The exact damage done her has, however, never been ascertained.

All that night the daring band of blue-jackets held the fort unmolested. But on the following morning the townspeople again plucked up courage, and to the number of five hundred marched to the fort, and placing several pieces of artillery in battery, summoned the garrison to surrender. The flag of truce that bore the summons carried also the threat, that, unless the Americans laid down their arms without resistance, the fort would be stormed, and all therein put to the sword without mercy.

For answer to the summons, the Americans nailed their colors to the mast, and swore that while a man of them lived the fort should not be surrendered. By this bold defiance they so awed the enemy that the day passed without the expected assault; and at night the besiegers returned to their homes, without having fired a shot.

All that night the Americans worked busily, transferring to the "Providence" all the ammunition and stores in the fort; and the next morning the prizes were manned, the guns of the fort spiked, and the adventurous Yankees set sail in triumph. For three days they had held possession of the island, though outnumbered tenfold by the inhabitants; they had captured large quantities of ammunition and naval stores; they had freed their captured countrymen; they had retaken from the British five captured American vessels, and in the whole affair they had lost not a single man. It was an achievement of which a force of triple the number might have been proud.

In February, 1778, the Delaware, along the water-front of Philadelphia, was the scene of some dashing work by American sailors, under the command of Capt. John Barry. This officer was in command of the

"Effingham," one of the vessels which had been trapped in the Delaware by the unexpected occupation of Philadelphia by the British. The inactivity of the vessels, which had taken refuge at Whitehall, was a sore disappointment to Barry, who longed for the excitement and dangers of actual battle. With the British in force at Philadelphia, it was madness to think of taking the frigates down the stream. But Barry rightly thought that what could not be done with a heavy ship might be done with a few light boats.

Philadelphia was then crowded with British troops. The soldiers were well provided with money, and, finding themselves quartered in a city for the winter, led a life of continual gayety. The great accession to the population of the town made it necessary to draw upon the country far and near for provisions; and boats were continually plying upon the Delaware, carrying provisions to the city. To intercept some of these boats, and to give the merry British officers a taste of starvation, was Barry's plan.

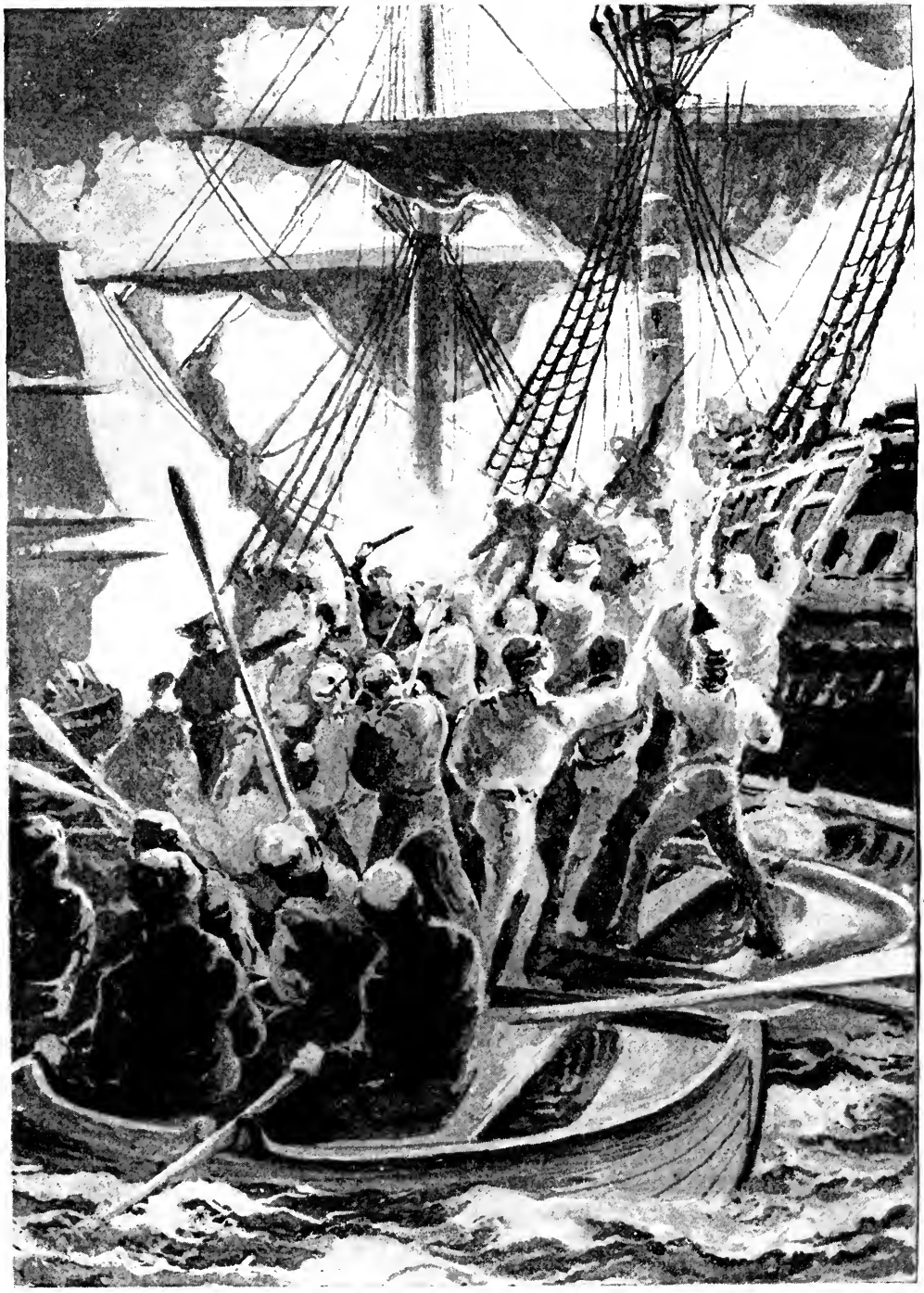
Accordingly four boats were manned with well-armed crews, and with muffled oars set out on a dark night to patrol the river. Philadelphia was reached, and the expedition was almost past the city, when the sentries on one of the British men-of-war gave the alarm. A few scattering shots were fired from the shore; but the jackies bent to their oars, and the boats were soon lost to sight in the darkness. When day broke, Barry was far down the river.

Opposite the little post held by the American army, and called Fort Penn, Barry spied a large schooner, mounting ten guns, and flying the British flag. With her were four transport ships, loaded with forage for the enemy's forces. Though the sun had risen, and it was broad day, Barry succeeded in running his boats alongside the schooner; and before the British suspected the presence of any enemy, the blue-jackets were clambering over the rail, cutlass and pistol in hand. There was no resistance. The astonished Englishmen threw down their arms, and rushed below. The victorious Americans battened down the hatches, ordered the four transports to surrender, on pain of being fired into,

and triumphantly carried all five prizes to the piers of Fort Penn. There the hatches were removed; and, the Yankee sailors being drawn up in line, Barry ordered the prisoners to come on deck. When all appeared, it was found that the Yankees had bagged one major, two captains, three lieutenants, ten soldiers, and about a hundred sailors and marines, — a very respectable haul for a party of not more than thirty American sailors.

The next day a British frigate and sloop-of-war appeared down the bay. They were under full sail, and were apparently making for Fort Penn, with the probable intention of recapturing Barry's prizes. Fearing that he might be robbed of the fruits of his victory, Barry put the four transports in charge of Capt. Middleton, with instructions to fire them should the enemy attempt to cut them out. In the mean time, he took the ten-gun schooner, and made for the Christiana River, in the hopes of taking her into shallow waters, whither the heavier British vessels could not follow. But, unluckily for his plans, the wind favored the frigate; and she gained upon him so rapidly, that only by the greatest expedition could he run his craft ashore and escape. Two of the guns were pointed down the main hatch, and a few rounds of round-shot were fired through the schooner's bottom. She sunk quickly; and the Americans pushed off from her side, just as the British frigate swung into position, and let fly her broadside at her escaping foes.

The schooner being thus disposed of, the British turned their attention to the four captured transports at Fort Penn. Capt. Middleton and Capt. McLane, who commanded the American militia on shore, had taken advantage of the delay to build a battery of bales of hay near the piers. The British sloop-of-war opened the attack, but the sharp-shooters in the battery and on the transports gave her so warm a reception that she retired. She soon returned to the attack, but was checked by the American fire, and might have been beaten off, had not Middleton received a mortal wound while standing on the battery and cheering on his men. Dismayed by the fall of their leader, the Americans set fire to the transport and fled to the woods, leaving the British masters of the field.



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BOARDING FROM BOATS.

Barry's conduct in this enterprise won for him the admiration of friend and foe alike. Sir William Howe, then commander-in-chief of the British forces in America, offered the daring American twenty thousand guineas and the command of a British frigate, if he would desert the service of the United States.

"Not the value and command of the whole British fleet," wrote Barry in reply, "can seduce me from the cause of my country."

After this adventure, Barry and his followers made their way through the woods back to Whitehall, where his ship the "Effingham" was lying at anchor. Here he passed the winter in inactivity. At Whitehall, and near that place, were nearly a dozen armed ships, frigates, sloops, and privateers. All had fled thither for safety when the British took possession of Philadelphia, and now found themselves caught in a trap. To run the blockade of British batteries and men-of-war at Philadelphia, was impossible; and there was nothing to do but wait until the enemy should evacuate the city.

But the British were in no haste to leave Philadelphia; and when they did get ready to leave, they determined to destroy the American flotilla before departing. Accordingly on the 4th of May, 1778, the water-front of the Quaker City was alive with soldiers and citizens watching the embarkation of the troops ordered against the American forces at Whitehall. On the placid bosom of the Delaware floated the schooners "Viper" and "Pembroke," the galleys "Hussar," "Cornwallis," "Ferret," and "Philadelphia," four gunboats, and eighteen flat-boats. Between this fleet and the shore, boats were busily plying, carrying off the soldiers of the light infantry, seven hundred of whom were detailed for the expedition. It was a holiday affair. The British expected little fighting; and with flags flying, and bands playing, the vessels started up stream, the cheers of the soldiers on board mingling with those on the shore.

Bristol, the landing-place chosen, was soon reached; and the troops disembarked without meeting with any opposition. Forming in solid column, the soldiers took up the march for Whitehall; but, when within

five miles of that place, a ruddy glare in the sky told that the Americans had been warned of their coming, and had set the torch to the shipping. When the head of the British column entered Whitehall, the two new American frigates "Washington" and "Effingham" were wrapped in flames. Both were new vessels, and neither had yet taken on board her battery. Several other vessels were lying at the wharves; and to these the British set the torch, and continued their march, leaving the roaring flames behind them. A little farther up the Delaware, at the point known as Crosswise Creek, the large privateer "Sturdy Beggar" was found, together with several smaller craft. The crews had all fled, and the deserted vessels met the fate of the other craft taken by the invaders. Then the British turned their steps homeward, and reached Philadelphia, after having burned almost a score of vessels, and fired not a single shot.

On the high seas during 1778 occurred several notable naval engagements. Of the more important of these we have spoken in our accounts of the exploits of Tucker, Biddle, and Paul Jones. The less important ones must be dismissed with a hasty word.

It may be said, that, in general, the naval actions of 1778 went against the Americans. In February of that year the "Alfred" was captured by a British frigate, and the "Raleigh" narrowly escaped. In March, the new frigate "Virginia," while beating out of Chesapeake Bay on her very first cruise, ran aground, and was captured by the enemy. In September, the United States frigate "Raleigh," when a few days out from Boston, fell in with two British vessels, — one a frigate, and the other a ship-of-the-line. Capt. Barry, whose daring exploits on the Delaware we have chronicled, was in command of the "Raleigh," and gallantly gave battle to the frigate, which was in the lead. Between these two vessels the conflict raged with great fury for upwards of two hours, when the fore-topmast and mizzen top-gallant-mast of the American having been shot away Barry attempted to close the conflict by boarding. The enemy kept at a safe distance, however; and his consort soon coming up, the Americans determined to seek safety in flight. The enemy pursued,

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THE LAST STAND.

keeping up a rapid fire; and the running conflict continued until midnight. Finally Barry set fire to his ship, and with the greater part of his crew escaped to the nearest land, an island near the mouth of the Penobscot. The British immediately boarded the abandoned ship, extinguished the flames, and carried their prize away in triumph.

To offset these reverses to the American arms, there were one or two victories for the Americans, aside from those won by Paul Jones, and the exploits of privateers and colonial armed vessels, which we shall group together in a later chapter. The first of these victories was won by an army officer, who was later transferred to the navy, and won great honor in the naval service.

In an inlet of Narragansett Bay, near Newport, the British had anchored a powerful floating battery, made of the dismasted hulk of the schooner "Pigot," on which were mounted twelve eight-pounders and ten swivel guns. It was about the time that the fleet sent by France to aid the United States was expected to arrive; and the British had built and placed in position this battery, to close the channel leading to Newport. Major Silas Talbot, an army officer who had won renown earlier in the war by a daring but unsuccessful attempt to destroy two British frigates in the Hudson River, by means of fire-ships, obtained permission to lead an expedition for the capture of the "Pigot." Accordingly, with sixty picked men, he set sail from Providence in the sloop "Hawk," mounting three three-pounders. When within a few miles of the "Pigot," he landed, and, borrowing a horse, rode down and reconnoitred the battery. When the night set in, he returned to the sloop, and at once weighed anchor and made for the enemy. As the "Hawk" drew near the "Pigot," the British sentinels challenged her, and receiving no reply, fired a volley of musketry, which injured no one. On came the "Hawk," under a full spread of canvas. A kedge-anchor had been lashed to the end of her bowsprit; and, before the British could reload, this crashed through the boarding-nettings of the "Pigot," and caught in the shrouds. The two vessels being fast, the Americans, with ringing cheers, ran along the bowsprit, and dropped on the deck of the "Pigot." The surprise

was complete. The British captain rushed on deck, clad only in his shirt and drawers, and strove manfully to rally his crew. But as the Americans, cutlass and pistol in hand, swarmed over the taffrail, the surprised British lost heart, and fled to the hold, until at last the captain found himself alone upon the deck. Nothing was left for him but to surrender with the best grace possible; and soon Talbot was on his way back to Providence, with his prize and a shipful of prisoners.

But perhaps the greatest naval event of 1778 in American waters was the arrival of the fleet sent by France to co-operate with the American forces. Not that any thing of importance was ever accomplished by this naval force: the French officers seemed to find their greatest satisfaction in manœuvring, reconnoitring, and performing in the most exact and admirable manner all the preliminaries to a battle. Having done this, they would sail away, never firing a gun. The Yankees were prone to disregard the nice points of naval tactics. Their plan was to lay their ships alongside the enemy, and pound away until one side or the other had to yield or sink. But the French allies were strong on tactics, and somewhat weak in dash; and, as a result, there is not one actual combat in which they figured to be recorded.

It was a noble fleet that France sent to the aid of the struggling Americans, — twelve ships-of-the-line and three frigates. What dashing Paul Jones would have done, had he ever enjoyed the command of such a fleet, almost passes imagination. Certain it is that he would have wasted little time in formal evolutions. But the fleet was commanded by Count d'Estaing, a French naval officer of honorable reputation. What he accomplished during his first year's cruise in American waters, can be told in a few words. His intention was to trap Lord Howe's fleet in the Delaware, but he arrived too late. He then followed the British to New York, but was baffled there by the fact that his vessels were too heavy to cross the bar. Thence he went to Newport, where the appearance of his fleet frightened the British into burning four of their frigates, and sinking two sloops-of-war. Lord Howe, hearing of this, plucked up courage, and, gathering together all his ships, sailed from

New York to Newport, to give battle to the French. The two fleets were about equally matched. On the 10th of August the enemies met in the open sea, off Newport. For two days they kept out of range of each other, manœuvring for the weather-gage; that is, the French fleet, being to windward of the British, strove to keep that position, while the British endeavored to take it from them. The third day a gale arose; and when it subsided the ships were so crippled, that, after exchanging a few harmless broadsides at long range, they withdrew, and the naval battle was ended.

Such was the record of D'Estaing's magnificent fleet during 1778. Certainly the Americans had little to learn from the representatives of the power that had for years contended with England for the mastery of the seas.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAST YEARS OF THE WAR. — DISASTROUS EXPEDITION TO THE PENOBSCOT. — WHOLESALE CAPTURES ON THE NEWFOUNDLAND BANKS. — FRENCH SHIPS IN AMERICAN WATERS. — TAKING OF CHARLESTON. — THE "TRUMBULL'S" VICTORY AND DEFEAT. — CAPT. BARRY AND THE "ALLIANCE." — CLOSE OF THE WAR.

THE year 1779 is chiefly known in American naval history as the year in which Paul Jones did his most brilliant service in the "Bon Homme Richard." The glory won by the Americans was chiefly gained in European waters. Along the coast of the United States, there were some dashing actions; but the advantage generally remained with the British.

Perhaps the most notable naval event of this year, aside from the battle between the "Bon Homme Richard" and the "Serapis," was the expedition sent by the State of Massachusetts against the British post at Castine, on the banks of the Penobscot River. At this unimportant settlement in the wilds of Maine, the British had established a military post, with a garrison of about a thousand men, together with four armed vessels. Here they might have been permitted to remain in peace, so far as any danger from their presence was to be apprehended by the people of New England. But the sturdy citizens of Massachusetts had boasted, that, since the evacuation of Boston, no British soldier had dared to set foot on Massachusetts soil; and the news of this invasion caused the people of Boston to rise as one man, and demand that the invaders should be expelled.

Accordingly a joint naval and military expedition was fitted out under authority granted by the Legislature of the State. Congress detailed

the United States frigate "Warren," and the sloops-of-war "Diligence" and "Providence," to head the expedition. The Massachusetts cruisers "Hazard," "Active," and "Tyrannicide" represented the regular naval forces of the Bay State; and twelve armed vessels belonging to private citizens were hired, to complete the armada. The excitement among seafaring men ran high. Every man who had ever swung a cutlass or sighted a gun was anxious to accompany the expedition. Ordinarily it was difficult to ship enough men for the navy; now it was impossible to take all the applicants. It is even recorded that the list of common sailors on the armed ship "Vengeance" included thirty masters of merchantmen, who waived all considerations of rank, in order that they might join the expedition.

To co-operate with the fleet, a military force was thought necessary; and accordingly orders were issued for fifteen hundred of the militia of the district of Maine to assemble at Townsend. Brig.-Gen. Sullivan was appointed to the command of the land forces, while Capt. Saltonstall of the "Warren" was made commodore of the fleet.

Punctually on the day appointed the white sails of the American ships were seen by the militiamen at the appointed rendezvous. But when the ships dropped anchor, and the commodore went ashore to consult with the officers of the land forces, he found that but nine hundred of the militiamen had responded to the call. Nevertheless, it was determined, after a brief consultation, to proceed with the expedition, despite the sadly diminished strength of the militia battalions.

On the 23d of July, the fleet set sail from the harbor of Townsend. It was an extraordinary and impressive spectacle. The shores of the harbor were covered with unbroken forests, save at the lower end where a little hamlet of scarce five hundred people gave a touch of civilization to the wild scene. But the water looked as though the commerce of a dozen cities had centred there. On the placid bosom of the little bay floated forty-four vessels. The tread of men about the capstans, the hoarse shouts of command, the monotonous songs of the sailors, the creaking of cordage, and the flapping of sails gave an unwonted turbu-

lence to the air which seldom bore a sound other than the voices of birds or the occasional blows of a woodman's axe. Nineteen vessels-of-war and twenty-five transports imparted to the harbor of Townsend an air of life and bustle to which it had been a stranger, and which it has never since experienced.

The weather was clear, and the wind fair; so that two days after leaving Townsend the fleet appeared before the works of the enemy. Standing on the quarter-deck of the "Warren," the commodore and the general eagerly scanned the enemy's defences, and after a careful examination were forced to admit that the works they had to carry were no mean specimens of the art of fortification. The river's banks rose almost perpendicularly from the water-side, and on their crest were perched the enemy's batteries, while on a high and precipitous hill was built a fort or citadel. In the river were anchored the four armed vessels.

Two days were spent by the Americans in reconnoitring the enemy's works; and on the 28th of July the work of disembarking the troops began, under a heavy fire from the enemy's batteries. The "Warren" and one of the sloops-of-war endeavored to cover the landing party by attacking the batteries; and a spirited cannonade followed, in which the American flag-ship suffered seriously. At last all the militia, together with three hundred marines, were put on shore, and at once assaulted the batteries. They were opposed by about an equal number of well-drilled Scotch regulars, and the battle raged fiercely; the men-of-war in the river covering the advance of the troops by a spirited and well-directed fire. More than once the curving line of men rushed against the fiery front of the British ramparts, and recoiled, shattered by the deadly volleys of the Scotch veterans. Here and there, in the grass and weeds, the forms of dead men began to be seen. The pitiable spectacle of the wounded, painfully crawling to the rear, began to make the pulse of the bravest beat quicker. But the men of Massachusetts, responsive to the voices of their officers, re-formed their shattered ranks, and charged again and again, until at last, with a mighty cheer, they swept over the

ramparts, driving the British out. Many of the enemy surrendered; more fled for shelter to the fort on the hill. The smoke and din of battle died away. There came a brief respite in the bloody strife. The Americans had won the first trick in the bloody game of war.

Only a short pause followed; then the Americans moved upon the fort. But here they found themselves overmatched. Against the towering bastions of the fortress they might hurl themselves in vain. The enemy, safe behind its heavy parapets, could mow down their advancing ranks with a cool and deliberate fire. The assailants had already sacrificed more than a hundred men. Was it wise now to order an assault that might lead to the loss of twice that number?

The hotheads cried out for the immediate storming of the fort; but cooler counsels prevailed, and a siege was decided upon. Trenches were dug, the guns in the outlying batteries were turned upon the fort, and the New Englanders sat down to wait until the enemy should be starved out, or until re-enforcements might be brought from Boston.

So for three weeks the combatants rested on their arms, glaring at each other over the tops of their breastworks, and now and then exchanging a shot or a casual volley, but doing little in the way of actual hostilities. Provisions were failing the British, and they began to feel that they were in a trap from which they could only emerge through a surrender, when suddenly the situation was changed, and the fortunes of war went against the Americans.

One morning the "Tyrannicide," which was stationed on the lookout down the bay, was seen beating up the river, under a full press of sail. Signals flying at her fore indicated that she had important news to tell. Her anchor had not touched the bottom before a boat pushed off from her side, and made straight for the commodore's flagship. Reaching the "Warren," a lieutenant clambered over the side, and saluted Commodore Saltonstall on the quarter-deck.

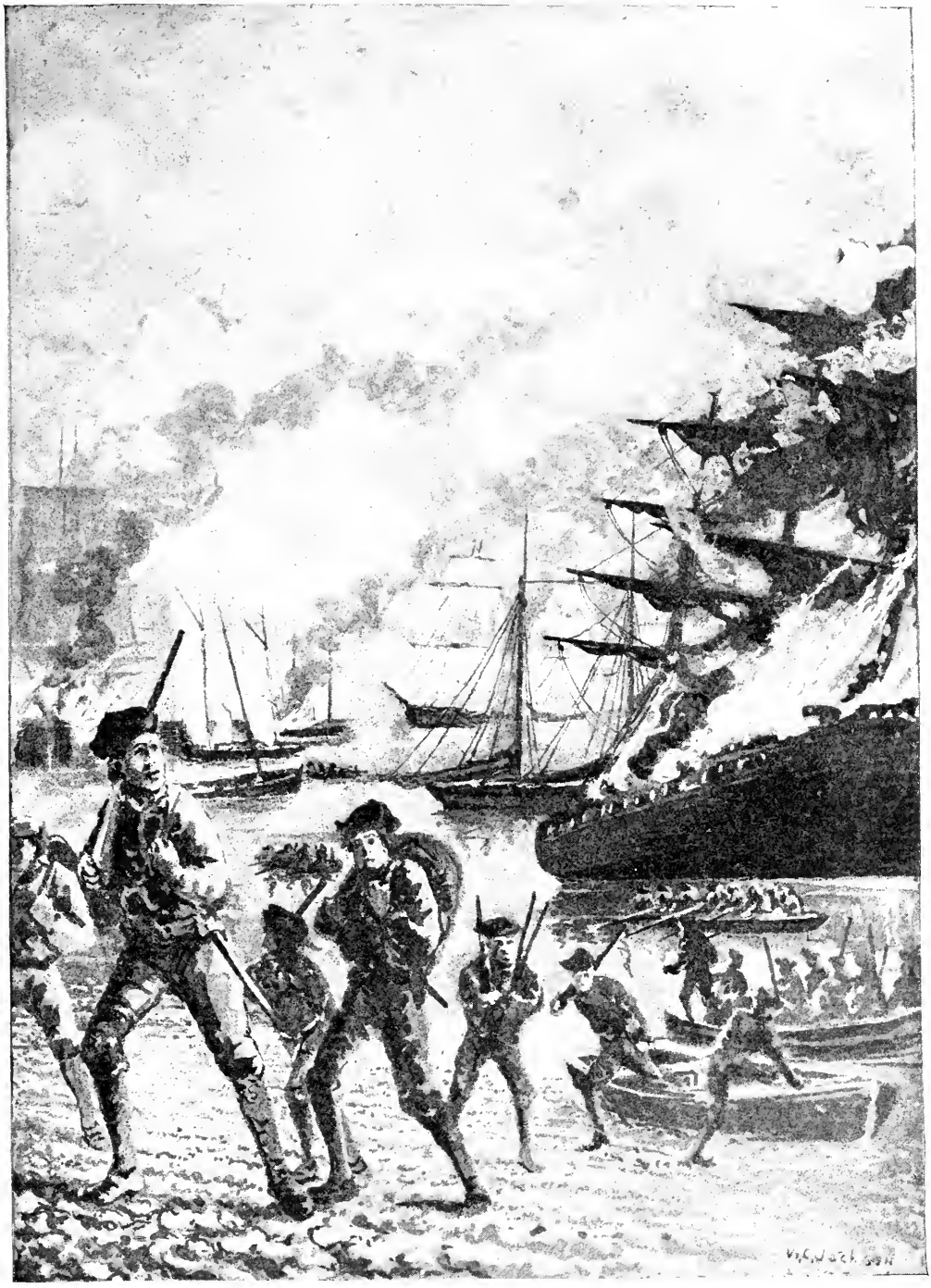
"Capt. Cathcart's compliments, sir," said he, "and five British men-of-war are just entering the bay. The first one appears to be the 'Rainbow,' forty-four."

Here was news indeed. Though superior in numbers, the Americans were far inferior in weight of metal. After a hasty consultation, it was determined to abandon the siege, and retreat with troops and vessels to the shallow waters of the Penobscot, whither the heavy men-of-war of the enemy would be unable to follow them. Accordingly the troops were hastily re-embarked, and a hurried flight began, which was greatly accelerated by the appearance of the enemy coming up the river.

The chase did not continue long before it became evident the enemy would overhaul the retreating ships. Soon he came within range, and opened fire with his bow-guns, in the hopes of crippling one of the American ships. The fire was returned; and for several hours the wooded shores of the Penobscot echoed and re-echoed the thunders of the cannonade, as the warring fleets swept up the river.

At last the conviction forced itself on the minds of the Americans, that for them there was no escape. The British were steadily gaining upon them, and there was no sign of the shoal water in which they had hoped to find a refuge. It would seem that a bold dash might have carried the day for the Americans, so greatly did they outnumber their enemies. But this plan does not appear to have suggested itself to Capt. Saltonstall, who had concentrated all his efforts upon the attempt to escape. When escape proved to be hopeless, his only thought was to destroy his vessels. Accordingly his flagship, the "Warren," was run ashore, and set on fire. The action of the commodore was imitated by the rest of the officers, and soon the banks of the river were lined with blazing vessels. The "Hunter," the "Hampden," and one transport fell into the hands of the British. The rest of the forty-nine vessels — men-of-war, privateers, and transports — that made up the fleet were destroyed by flames.

It must indeed have been a stirring spectacle. The shores of the Penobscot River were then a trackless wilderness; the placid bosom of the river itself had seldom been traversed by a heavier craft than the slender birch-bark canoe of the red man; yet here was this river crowded with shipping, the dark forests along its banks lighted up by the glare



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DESTRUCTION OF THE PENOBSCOT EXPEDITION.

of twoscore angry fires. Through the thickets and underbrush parties of excited men broke their way, seeking for a common point of meeting, out of range of the cannon of the enemy. The British, meantime, were striving to extinguish the flames, but with little success; and before the day ended, little remained of the great Massachusetts flotilla, except the three captured ships and sundry heaps of smouldering timber.

The hardships of the soldiers and marines who had escaped capture, only to find themselves lost in the desolate forest, were of the severest kind. Separating into parties they plodded along, half-starved, with torn and rain-soaked clothing, until finally, footsore and almost perishing, they reached the border settlements, and were aided on their way to Boston. The disaster was complete, and for months its depressing effect upon American naval enterprise was observable.

In observing the course of naval events in 1779, it is noticeable that the most effective work was done by the cruisers sent out by the individual States, or by privateers. The United States navy, proper, did little except what was done in European waters by Paul Jones. Indeed, along the American coast, a few cruises in which no actions of moment occurred, although several prizes were taken, make up the record of naval activity for the year.

The first of these cruises was that made in April by the ships "Warren," "Queen of France," and "Ranger." They sailed from Boston, and were out but a few days when they captured a British privateer of fourteen guns. From one of the sailors on this craft it was learned that a large fleet of transports and storeships had just sailed from New York, bound for Georgia. Crowding on all sail, the Americans set out in pursuit, and off Cape Henry overhauled the chase. Two fleets were sighted, one to windward numbering nine sail, and one to leeward made up of ten sail. The pursuers chose the fleet to windward for their prey, and by sharp work succeeded in capturing seven vessels in eight hours. Two of the ships were armed cruisers of twenty-nine and sixteen guns respectively, and all the prizes were heavy laden with provisions, ammunition, and cavalry accoutrements. All were safely taken into port.

In June, another fleet of United States vessels left Boston in search of British game. The "Queen of France" and the "Ranger" were again employed; but the "Warren" remained in port, fitting out for her ill-fated expedition to the Penobscot. Her place was taken by the "Providence," thirty-two. For a time the cruisers fell in with nothing of importance. But one day about the middle of July, as the three vessels lay hove to off the banks of Newfoundland, in the region of perpetual fog, the dull booming of a signal gun was heard. Nothing was to be seen on any side. From the quarter-deck, and from the cross-trees alike, the eager eyes of the officers and seamen strove in vain to penetrate the dense curtain of gray fog that shut them in. But again the signal gun sounded, then another; and tone and direction alike told that the two reports had not come from the same cannon. Then a bell was heard telling the hour, — another, still another; then a whole chorus of bells. Clearly a large fleet was shut in the fog.

About eleven o'clock in the morning the fog lifted, and to their intense surprise the crew of the "Queen of France" found themselves close alongside of a large merchant-ship. As the fog cleared away more completely, ships appeared on every side; and the astonished Yankees found themselves in the midst of a fleet of about one hundred and fifty sail under convoy of a British ship-of-the-line, and several frigates and sloops-of-war. Luckily the United States vessels had no colors flying, and nothing about them to betray their nationality: so Capt. Rathburn of the "Queen" determined to try a little masquerading.

Bearing down upon the nearest merchantman, he hailed her; and the following conversation ensued, —

"What fleet is this?"

"British merchantmen from Jamaica, bound for London. Who are you?"

"His Majesty's ship 'Arethusa,'" answered Rathburn boldly, "from Halifax on cruise. Have you seen any Yankee privateers?"

"Ay, ay, sir," was the response. "Several have been driven out of the fleet."

"Come aboard the 'Arethusa,' then. I wish to consult with you."

Soon a boat put off from the side of the merchantman, and a jolly British sea-captain confidently clambered to the deck of the "Queen." Great was his astonishment to be told that he was a prisoner, and to see his boat's crew brought aboard, and their places taken by American jackies. Back went the boat to the British ship; and soon the Americans were in control of the craft, without in the least alarming the other vessels, that lay almost within hail. The "Queen" then made up to another ship, and captured her in the same manner.

But at this juncture Commodore Whipple, in the "Providence," hailed the "Queen," and directed Rathburn to edge out of the fleet before the British men-of-war should discover his true character. Rathburn protested vigorously, pointing out the two vessels he had captured, and urging Whipple to follow his example, and capture as many vessels as he could in the same manner. Finally Whipple overcame his fears, and adopted Rathburn's methods, with such success that shortly after nightfall the Americans left the fleet, taking with them eleven rich prizes. Eight of these they succeeded in taking safe to Boston, where they were sold for more than a million dollars.

In May, 1779, occurred two unimportant engagements, — one off Sandy Hook, in which the United States sloop "Providence," ten guns, captured the British sloop "Diligent," after a brief but spirited engagement; the second action occurred off St. Kitt's, where the United States brig "Retaliation" successfully resisted a vigorous attack by a British cutter and a brig. The record of the regular navy for the year closed with the cruise of the United States frigates "Deane" and "Boston," that set sail from the Delaware late in the summer. They kept the seas for nearly three months, but made only a few bloodless captures.

The next year opened with a great disaster to the American cause. The Count d'Estaing, after aimlessly wandering up and down the coast of the United States with the fleet ostensibly sent to aid the Americans, suddenly took himself and his fleet off to the West Indies. Sir Henry Clinton soon learned of the departure of the French, and gathered an

expedition for the capture of Charleston. On the 10th of February, Clinton with five thousand troops, and a British fleet under Admiral Arbuthnot, appeared off Edisto Inlet, about thirty miles from Charleston, and began leisurely preparations for an attack upon the city. Had he pushed ahead and made his assault at once, he would have met but little resistance; but his delay of over a month gave the people of Charleston time to prepare for a spirited resistance.

The approach of the British fleet penned up in Charleston harbor several United States men-of-war and armed vessels, among them the "Providence," "Queen of France," "Boston," "Ranger," "Gen. Moultrie," and "Notre Dame." These vessels took an active part in the defence of the harbor against Arbuthnot's fleet, but were beaten back. The "Queen," the "Gen. Moultrie," and the "Notre Dame" were then sunk in the channel to obstruct the progress of the enemy; their guns being taken ashore, and mounted in the batteries on the sea-wall. Then followed days of terror for Charleston. The land forces of the enemy turned siege guns on the unhappy city, and a constant bombardment was kept up from the hostile fleet. Fort Sumter, the batteries along the water front, and the ships remaining to the Americans answered boldly. But the defence was hopeless. The city was hemmed in by an iron cordon. The hot-shot of the enemy's batteries were falling in the streets, and flames were breaking out in all parts of the town. While the defence lasted, the men-of-war took an active part in it; and, indeed, the sailors were the last to consent to a surrender. So noticeable was the activity of the frigate "Boston" in particular, that, when it became evident that the Americans could hold out but a little longer, Admiral Arbuthnot sent her commander a special order to surrender.

"I do not think much of striking my flag to your present force," responded bluff Samuel Tucker, who commanded the "Boston;" "for I have struck more of your flags than are now flying in this harbor."

But, despite this bold defiance, the inevitable capitulation soon followed. Charleston fell into the hands of the British; and with the city went the three men-of-war, "Providence," "Boston," and "Ranger."

It will be noticed that this disaster was the direct result of the disappearance of Count d'Estaing and the French fleet. To the student of history who calmly considers the record of our French naval allies in the Revolution, there appears good reason to believe that their presence did us more harm than good. Under De Grasse, the French fleet did good service in co-operation with the allied armies in the Yorktown campaign; but, with this single exception, no instance can be cited of any material aid rendered by it to the American cause. The United States navy, indeed, suffered on account of the French alliance; for despite the loss of many vessels in 1779 and 1780, Congress refused to increase the navy in any way, trusting to France to care for America's interests on the seas. The result of this policy was a notable falling-off in the number and spirit of naval actions.

The ship "Trumbull," twenty-eight, one of the exploits of which we have already chronicled, saw a good deal of active service during the last two years of the war; and though she finally fell into the hands of the enemy, it was only because the odds against her were not to be overcome by the most spirited resistance. It was on the 2d of June, 1780, that the "Trumbull," while cruising far out in the Atlantic Ocean in the path of British merchantmen bound for the West Indies, sighted a strange sail hull down to windward. The "Trumbull" was then in command of Capt. James Nicholson, an able and plucky officer. Immediately on hearing the report of the lookout, Nicholson ordered all the canvas furled, in order that the stranger might not catch sight of the "Trumbull." It is, of course, obvious that a ship under bare poles is a far less conspicuous object upon the ocean, than is the same ship with her yards hung with vast clouds of snowy canvas. But apparently the stranger sighted the "Trumbull," and had no desire to avoid her; for she bore down upon the American ship rapidly, and showed no desire to avoid a meeting. Seeing this, Nicholson made sail, and was soon close to the stranger. As the two ships drew closer together, the stranger showed her character by firing three guns, and hoisting the British colors.

Seeing an action impending, Nicholson called his crew aft and harangued them, as was the custom before going into battle. It was not a promising outlook for the American ship. She was but recently out of port, and was manned largely by "green hands." The privateers had so thoroughly stripped the decks of able seamen, that the "Trumbull" had to ship men who knew not one rope from another; and it is even said, that, when the drums beat to quarters the day of the battle, many of the sailors were suffering from the landsman's terror, seasickness. But what they lacked in experience, they made up in enthusiasm.

With the British flag at the peak, the "Trumbull" bore down upon the enemy. But the stranger was not to be deceived by so hackneyed a device. He set a private signal, and, as the Americans did not answer it, let fly a broadside at one hundred yards distance. The "Trumbull" responded with spirit, and the stars and stripes went fluttering to the peak in the place of the British ensign. Then the thunder of battle continued undiminished for two hours and a half. The wind was light, and the vessels rode on an even keel nearly abreast of each other, and but fifty yards apart. At times their yard-arms interlocked; and still the heavy broadsides rang out, and the flying shot crashed through beam and stanchion, striking down the men at their guns, and covering the decks with blood. Twice the flying wads of heavy paper from the enemy's guns set the "Trumbull" afire, and once the British ship was endangered by the same cause.

At last the fire of the enemy slackened, and the Americans, seeing victory within their grasp, redoubled their efforts; but at this critical moment one of the gun-deck officers came running to Nicholson, with the report that the main-mast had been repeatedly hit by the enemy's shot, and was now tottering. If the main-mast went by the board, the fate of the "Trumbull" was sealed. Crowding sail on the other masts, the "Trumbull" shot ahead, and was soon out of the line of fire, the enemy being apparently too much occupied with his own injuries to molest her. Hardly had she gone the distance of a musket-shot, when her main and mizzen top-masts went by the board; and before the nimble

jackies could cut away the wreck the other spars followed, until nothing was left but the fore-mast. When the crashing and confusion was over, the "Trumbull" lay a pitiable wreck, and an easy prey for her foe.

But the Briton showed a strange disinclination to take advantage of the opportunity. The Yankee sailors worked like mad in cutting away the wreck; then rushed to their guns, ready to make a desperate, if hopeless, resistance in case of an attack. But the attack never came. Without even a parting shot the enemy went off on her course; and before she was out of sight her main top-mast was seen to fall, showing that she too had suffered in the action.

Not for months after did the crew of the "Trumbull" learn the name of the vessel they had fought. At last it was learned that she was a heavy letter-of-marque, the "Watt." Her exact weight of metal has never been ascertained, though Capt. Nicholson estimated it at thirty-four or thirty-six guns. The "Trumbull" mounted thirty-six guns. The captain of the "Watt" reported his loss to have been ninety-two in killed and wounded; the loss of the "Trumbull" amounted to thirty-nine, though two of her lieutenants were among the slain. This action, in severity, ranked next to the famous naval duel between the "Bon Homme Richard" and the "Serapis."

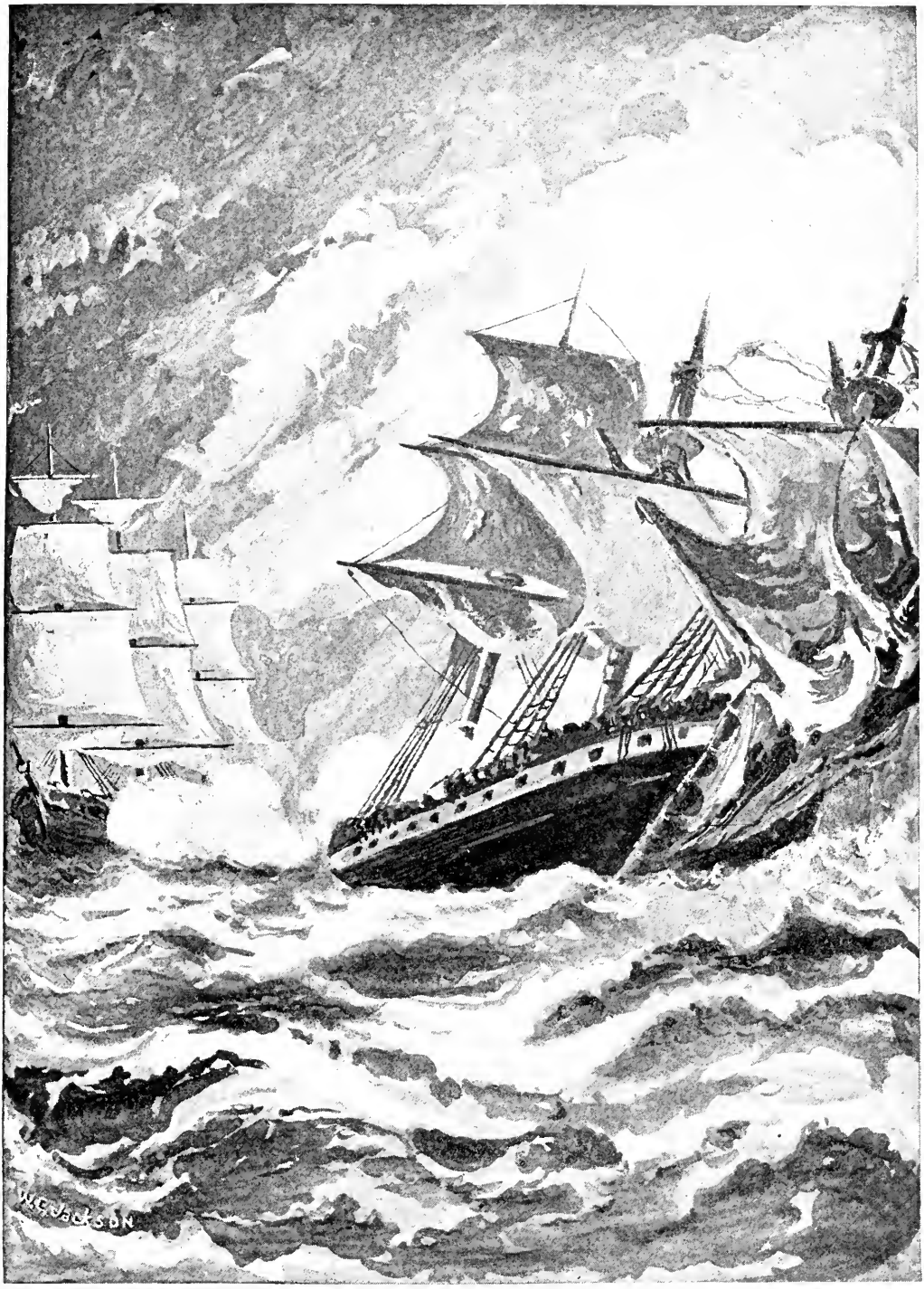
As the "Trumbull" fought her last battle under the flag of the United States a year later, and as our consideration of the events of the Revolution is drawing to a close, we may abandon chronological order, and follow Nicholson and his good ship to the end of their career. In August, 1781, the "Trumbull" left the Delaware, convoying twenty-eight merchantmen, and accompanied by one privateer. Again her crew was weakened by the scarcity of good seamen, and this time Nicholson had adopted the dangerous and indefensible expedient of shipping British prisoners-of-war. There were fifty of these renegades in the crew; and naturally, as they were ready to traitorously abandon their own country, they were equally ready for treachery to the flag under which they sailed. There were many instances during the Revolution of United States ships being manned largely by British prisoners. Usually the

crews thus obtained were treacherous and insubordinate. Even if it had been otherwise, the custom was a bad one, and repugnant to honorable men.

So with a crew half-trained and half-disaffected, the "Trumbull" set out to convoy a fleet of merchantmen through waters frequented by British men-of-war. Hardly had she passed the capes when three British cruisers were made out astern. One, a frigate, gave chase. Night fell, and in the darkness the "Trumbull" might have escaped with her charges, but that a violent squall struck her, carrying away her fore-top-mast and main-top-gallant-mast. Her convoy scattered in all directions, and by ten o'clock the British frigate had caught up with the disabled American.

The night was still squally, with bursts of rain and fitful flashes of lightning, which lighted up the decks of the American ship as she tossed on the waves. The storm had left her in a sadly disabled condition. The shattered top hamper had fallen forward, cumbering up the fore-castle, and so tangling the bow tackle that the jibs were useless. The foresail was jammed and torn by the fore-topsail-yard. There was half a day's work necessary to clear away the wreck, and the steadily advancing lights of the British ship told that not half an hour could be had to prepare for the battle.

There was no hope that resistance could be successful, but the brave hearts of Nicholson and his officers recoiled from the thought of tamely striking the flag without firing a shot. So the drummers were ordered to beat the crew to quarters; and soon, by the light of the battle-lanterns, the captains of the guns were calling over the names of the sailors. The roll-call had proceeded but a short time when it became evident that most of the British renegades were absent from their stations. The officers and marines went below to find them. While they were absent, others of the renegades, together with about half of the crew whom they had tainted with their mutinous plottings, put out the battle-lanterns, and hid themselves deep in the hold. At this moment the enemy came up, and opened fire.



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THE "TRUMBULL" AND THE BRITISH CRUISERS.

Determined to make some defence, Nicholson sent the few faithful jackies to the guns, and the officers worked side by side with the sailors. The few guns that were manned were served splendidly, and the unequal contest was maintained for over an hour, when a second British man-of-war came up, and the "Trumbull" was forced to strike. At no time had more than forty of her people been at the guns. To this fact is due the small loss of life; for, though the ship was terribly cut up, only five of her crew were killed, and eleven wounded.

The frigate that had engaged the "Trumbull" was the "Iris," formerly the "Hancock" captured from the Americans by the "Rainbow." She was one of the largest of the American frigates, while the "Trumbull" was one of the smallest. The contest, therefore, would have been unequal, even had not so many elements of weakness contributed to the "Trumbull's" discomfiture.

Taking up again the thread of our narrative of the events of 1780, we find that for three months after the action between the "Trumbull" and the "Watt" there were no naval actions of moment. Not until October did a United States vessel again knock the tompions from her guns, and give battle to an enemy. During that month the cruiser "Saratoga" fell in with a hostile armed ship and two brigs. The action that followed was brief, and the triumph of the Americans complete. One broadside was fired by the "Saratoga;" then, closing with her foe, she threw fifty men aboard, who drove the enemy below. But the gallant Americans were not destined to profit by the results of their victory; for, as they were making for the Delaware, the British seventy-four "Intrepid" intercepted them, and recaptured all the prizes. The "Saratoga" escaped capture, only to meet a sadder fate; for, as she never returned to port, it is supposed that she foundered with all on board.

The autumn and winter passed without any further exploits on the part of the navy. The number of the regular cruisers had been sadly diminished, and several were kept blockaded in home ports. Along the American coast the British cruisers fairly swarmed; and the only chance for the few Yankee ships afloat was to keep at sea as much as possible,

and try to intercept the enemy's privateers, transports, and merchantmen, on their way across the ocean.

One United States frigate, and that one a favorite ship in the navy, was ordered abroad in February, 1781, and on her voyage did some brave work for her country. This vessel was the "Alliance," once under the treacherous command of the eccentric Landais, and since his dismissal commanded by Capt. John Barry, of whose plucky fight in the "Raleigh" we have already spoken. The "Alliance" sailed from Boston, carrying an army officer on a mission to France. She made the voyage without sighting an enemy. Having landed her passenger, she set out from l'Orient, with the "Lafayette," forty, in company. The two cruised together for three days, capturing two heavy privateers. They then parted, and the "Alliance" continued her cruise alone.

On the 28th of May the lookout reported two sail in sight; and soon the strangers altered their course, and bore down directly upon the American frigate. It was late in the afternoon, and darkness set in before the strangers were near enough for their character to be made out. At dawn all eyes on the "Alliance" scanned the ocean in search of the two vessels, which were then easily seen to be a sloop-of-war and a brig. Over each floated the British colors.

A dead calm rested upon the waters. Canvas was spread on all the ships, but flapped idly against the yards. Not the slightest motion could be discerned, and none of the ships had steerage-way. The enemy had evidently determined to fight; for before the sun rose red and glowing from beneath the horizon, sweeps were seen protruding from the sides of the two ships, and they gradually began to lessen the distance between them and the American frigate. Capt. Barry had no desire to avoid the conflict; though in a calm, the lighter vessels, being manageable with sweeps, had greatly the advantage of the "Alliance," which could only lie like a log upon the water. Six hours of weary work with the sweeps passed before the enemy came near enough to hail. The usual questions and answers were followed by the roar of the cannon, and the action began. The prospects for the "Alliance" were dreary indeed; for the enemy

took positions on the quarters of the helpless ship, and were able to pour in broadsides, while she could respond only with a few of her aftermost guns. But, though the case looked hopeless, the Americans fought on, hoping that a wind might spring up, that would give the good ship "Alliance" at least a fighting chance.

As Barry strode the quarter-deck, watching the progress of the fight, encouraging his men, and looking out anxiously for indications of a wind, a grape-shot struck him in the shoulder, and felled him to the deck. He was on his feet again in an instant; and though weakened by the pain, and the rapid flow of blood from the wound, he remained on deck. At last, however, he became too weak to stand, and was carried below. At this moment a flying shot carried away the American colors; and, as the fire of the "Alliance" was stopped a moment for the loading of the guns, the enemy thought the victory won, and cheered lustily. But their triumph was of short duration; for a new ensign soon took the place of the vanished one, and the fire of the "Alliance" commenced again.

The "Alliance" was now getting into sore straits. The fire of the enemy had told heavily upon her, and her fire in return had done but little visible damage. As Capt. Barry lay on his berth, enfeebled by the pain of his wound, and waiting for the surgeon's attention, a lieutenant entered.

"The ship remains unmanageable, sir," said he. "The rigging is badly cut up, and there is danger that the fore-top-mast may go by the board. The enemy's fire is telling on the hull, and the carpenter reports two leaks. Eight or ten of the people are killed, and several officers wounded. Have we your consent to striking the colors?"

"No, sir," roared out Barry, sitting bolt upright. "And, if this ship can't be fought without me, I will be carried on deck."

The lieutenant returned with his report; and, when the story became known to the crew, the jackies cheered for their dauntless commander.

"We'll stand by the old man, lads," said one of the petty officers.

"Ay, ay, that we will! We'll stick to him right manfully," was the hearty response.

But now affairs began to look more hopeful for the "Alliance." Far away a gentle rippling of the water rapidly approaching the ship gave promise of wind. The quick eye of an old boatswain caught sight of it. "A breeze, a breeze!" he cried; and the jackies took up the shout, and sprang to their stations at the ropes, ready to take advantage of the coming gust. Soon the breeze arrived, the idly flapping sails filled out, the helmsman felt the responsive pressure of the water as he leaned upon the wheel, the gentle ripple of the water alongside gladdened the ears of the blue-jackets, the ship keeled over to leeward, then swung around responsive to her helm, and the first effective broadside went crashing into the side of the nearest British vessel. After that, the conflict was short. Though the enemy had nearly beaten the "Alliance" in the calm, they were no match for her when she was able to manœuvre. Their resistance was plucky; but when Capt. Barry came on deck, with his wound dressed, he was just in time to see the flags of both vessels come fluttering to the deck.

The two prizes proved to be the "Atlanta" sixteen, and the "Trepassy" fourteen. Both were badly cut up, and together had suffered a loss of forty-one men in killed and wounded. On the "Alliance" were eleven dead, and twenty-one wounded. As the capture of the two vessels threw about two hundred prisoners into the hands of the Americans, and as the "Alliance" was already crowded with captives, Capt. Barry made a cartel of the "Trepassy," and sent her into an English port with all the prisoners. The "Atlanta" he manned with a prize crew, and sent to Boston; but she unluckily fell in with a British cruiser in Massachusetts Bay, and was retaken.

Once more before the cessation of hostilities between Great Britain and the United States threw her out of commission, did the "Alliance" exchange shots with a hostile man-of-war. It was in 1782, when the noble frigate was engaged in bringing specie from the West Indies. She had under convoy a vessel loaded with supplies, and the two had hardly left Havana when some of the enemy's ships caught sight of them, and gave chase. While the chase was in progress, a fifty-gun ship

hove in sight, and was soon made out to be a French frigate. Feeling that he had an ally at hand, Barry now wore ship, and attacked the leading vessel, and a spirited action followed, until the enemy, finding himself hard pressed, signalled for his consorts, and Barry, seeing that the French ship made no sign of coming to his aid, drew off.

Irritated by the failure of the French frigate to come to his assistance, Barry bore down upon her and hailed. The French captain declared that the manœuvres of the "Alliance" and her antagonist had made him suspect that the engagement was only a trick to draw him into the power of the British fleet. He had feared that the "Alliance" had been captured, and was being used as a decoy; but now that the matter was made clear to him, he would join the "Alliance" in pursuit of the enemy. This he did; but Barry soon found that the fifty was so slow a sailer, that the "Alliance" might catch up with the British fleet, and be knocked to pieces by their guns, before the Frenchman could get within range. Accordingly he abandoned the chase in disgust, and renewed his homeward course. Some years later, an American gentleman travelling in Europe met the British naval officer who commanded the frigate which Barry had engaged. This officer, then a vice-admiral, declared that he had never before seen a ship so ably fought as was the "Alliance," and acknowledged that the presence of his consorts alone saved him a drubbing.

This engagement was the last fought by the "Alliance" during the Revolution, and with it we practically complete our narrative of the work of the regular navy during that war. One slight disaster to the American cause alone remains to be mentioned. The "Confederacy," a thirty-two-gun frigate built in 1778, was captured by the enemy in 1781. She was an unlucky ship, having been totally dismasted on her first cruise, and captured by an overwhelming force on her second.

Though this chapter completes the story of the regular navy during the Revolution, there remain many important naval events to be described in an ensuing chapter. The work of the ships fitted out by Congress was aided greatly by the armed cruisers furnished by individual States,

and privateers. Some of the exploits of these crafts and some desultory maritime hostilities we shall describe in the next chapter. And if the story of the United States navy, as told in these few chapters, seems a record of events trivial as compared with the gigantic naval struggles of 1812 and 1861, it must be remembered that not only were naval architecture and ordnance in their infancy in 1776, but that the country was young, and its sailors unused to the ways of war. But that country, young as it was, produced Paul Jones; and it is to be questioned whether any naval war since has brought forth a braver or nobler naval officer, or one more skilled in the handling of a single ship-of-war.

The result of the war of the Revolution is known to all. A new nation was created by it. These pages will perhaps convince their readers that to the navy was due somewhat the creation of that nation. And if to-day, in its power and might, the United States seems inclined to throw off the navy and belittle its importance, let the memory of Paul Jones and his colleagues be conjured up, to awaken the old enthusiasm over the triumphs of the stars and stripes upon the waves.

CHAPTER XIV.

WORK OF THE PRIVATEERS.—THE "GEN. HANCOCK" AND THE "LEVANT."—EXPLOITS OF THE "PICKERING."—THE "REVENGE."—THE "HOLKAR."—THE "CONGRESS" AND THE "SAVAGE."—THE "HYDER ALI" AND THE "GEN. MONK."—THE WHALE-BOAT HOSTILITIES.—THE OLD JERSEY PRISON-SHIP.

TO CHRONICLE in full the myriad exploits and experiences of the privateers and armed cruisers in the service of individual states during the Revolution, would require a volume thrice the size of this. Moreover, it is difficult and well-nigh impossible to obtain authentic information regarding the movements of this class of armed craft. An immense number of anecdotes of their prowess is current, and some few such narratives will be repeated in this chapter; but, as a rule, they are based only upon tradition, or the imperfect and often incorrect reports in the newspapers of the day.

The loss inflicted upon Great Britain by the activity of American privateers was colossal. For the first year of the war the Continental Congress was unwilling to take so belligerent a step as to encourage privateering; but, in the summer of 1776, the issuing of letters of marque and reprisal was begun, and in a short time all New England had gone to privateering. The ocean fairly swarmed with trim Yankee schooners and

brigs, and in the two years that followed nearly eight hundred merchantmen were taken.

Discipline on the privateers was lax, and the profits of a successful cruise were enormous. Often a new speedy craft paid her whole cost of construction on her first cruise. The sailors fairly revelled in money at the close of such a cruise; and, like true jack-tars, they made their money fly as soon as they got ashore. A few days would generally suffice to squander all the earnings of a two-months' cruise; and, penniless but happy, Jack would ship for another bout with fortune.

A volume could be written dealing with the exploits of the privateers, but for our purpose a few instances of their dash and spirit will be enough. Though the purpose of the privateers was purely mercenary, their chief end and aim being to capture defenceless merchantmen, yet they were always ready to fight when fighting was necessary, and more than once made a good showing against stronger and better disciplined naval forces. In many cases audacity and dash more than made up for the lack of strength.

In 1777 two American privateers hung about the British Isles, making captures, and sending their prizes into French ports. The exploits of Paul Jones were equalled by these irregular cruisers. One of them, being in need of provisions, put into the little Irish port of Beerhaven, and lay at anchor for ten hours, while her crew scoured the town in search of the needed stores. A second privateer boldly entered a harbor on the Island of Guernsey. A castle at the entrance of the harbor opened fire upon her, whereupon she came about, and, keeping out of range of the castle guns, captured a large brig that was making for the port. When night fell, the privateer sent a boat's crew ashore, and took captive two officers of the local militia.

In 1778 occurred an action between a private armed ship and a British frigate, in which the privateer was signally successful. On the 19th of September of that year, the "Gen. Hancock," a stout-built, well armed and manned privateer, fell in with the "Levant," a British frigate of thirty-two guns. The "Hancock" made no attempt to avoid a conflict, and

opened with a broadside without answering the enemy's hail. The action was stubbornly contested upon both sides. After an hour of fighting, the captain of the Yankee ship, peering through the smoke, saw that the colors no longer waved above his adversary.

"Have you struck?" he shouted.

"No. Fire away," came the response faintly through the roar of the cannon. Two hours longer the combat raged, with the ships lying yard-arm to yard-arm. A ball struck Capt. Hardy of the "Hancock" in the neck, and he was carried below, while the first lieutenant took command of the ship. A few minutes later there arose a deafening roar and blinding flash; a terrific shock threw the men on the American ship to the deck. Stifling smoke darkened the atmosphere; and pieces of timber, cordage, and even horribly torn bits of human flesh began to fall upon the decks. When the smoke cleared away, the Americans looked eagerly for their enemy. Where she had floated a minute or two before, was now a shattered, blackened hulk fast sinking beneath the waves. The surface of the sea for yards around was strewn with wreckage, and here and there men could be seen struggling for life. As ready to save life as they had been to destroy it, the Americans lowered their boats and pulled about, picking up the survivors of the explosion. The boatswain of the ill-fated ship and seventeen of the crew were thus saved, but more than fourscore brave fellows went down with her. The American vessel herself was damaged not a little by the violence of the explosion.

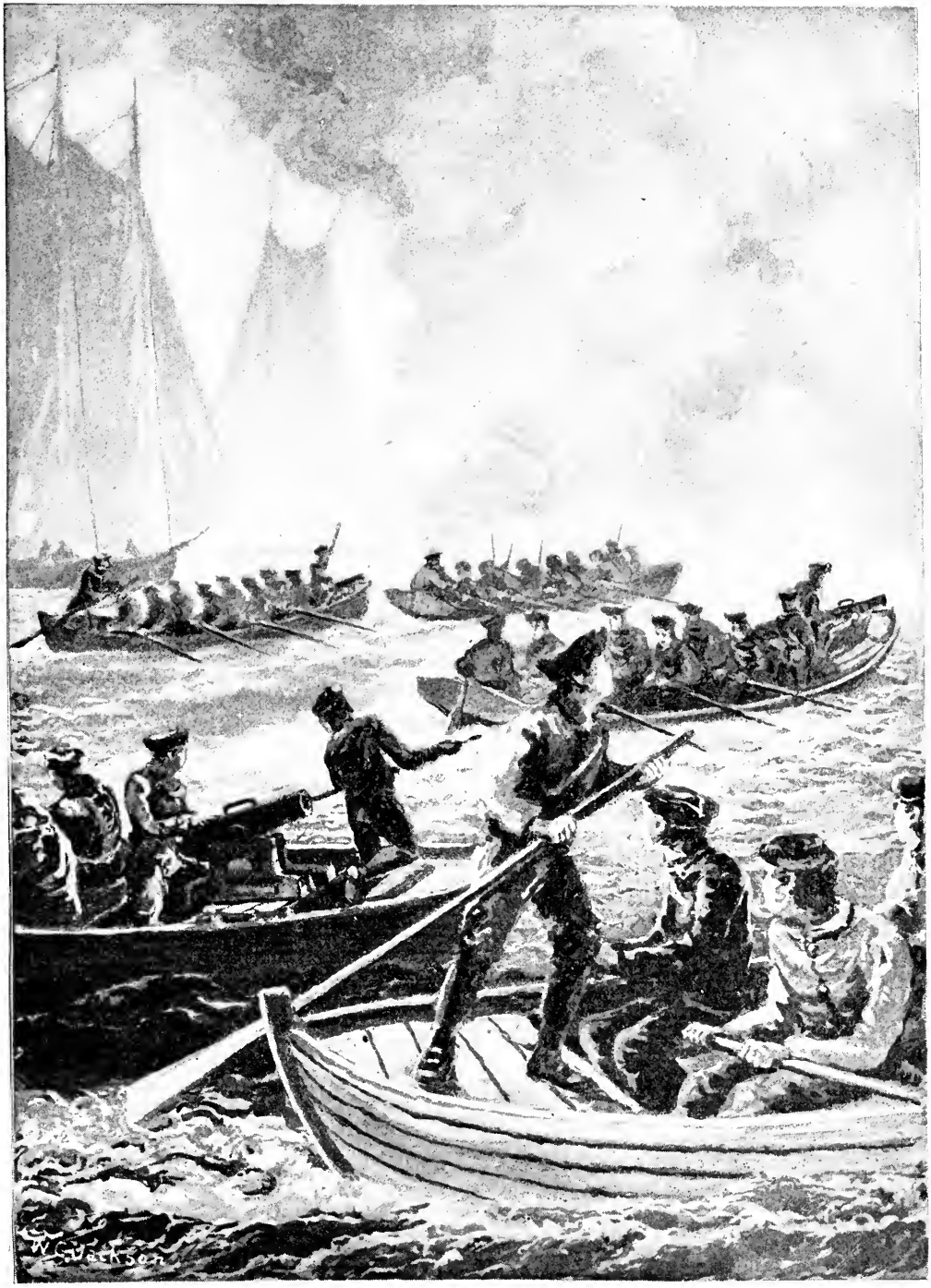
This was not the only case during this year in which a British man-of-war met defeat at the guns of a Yankee privateer. The "Hinchinbrooke," sloop-of-war fourteen; the "York," tender twelve; and the "Enterprise," ten guns, — all struck their colors to private armed vessels flying the stars and stripes.

By 1778 the privateers under the British flag were afloat in no small number. America had no commerce on which they might prey, and they looked forward only to recapturing those British vessels that had been taken by Yankee privateers and sent homeward. That so many British vessels should have found profitable employment in this pursuit,

is in itself a speaking tribute to the activity of the American private armed navy.

During the Revolution, as during the second war with Great Britain in 1812, Salem, Mass., and Baltimore, Md., were the principal points from which privateers hailed. In all the early wars of the United States, the term "Salem privateer" carried with it a picture of a fleet schooner, manned with a picked crew of able seamen, commanded by a lanky Yankee skipper who knew the byways of old ocean as well as the highways of trade, armed with eight, four, or six pounders, and a heavy "Long Tom" amidships. Scores of such craft sailed from Salem during the Revolution; and hardly a week passed without two or three returning privateers entering the little port and discharging their crews, to keep the little village in a turmoil until their prize money was spent, or, to use the sailors' phrase, until "no shot was left in the locker."

One of the most successful of the Salem privateers was the "Pickering," a craft carrying a battery of sixteen guns, and a crew of forty-seven men. On one cruise she fought an engagement of an hour and a half with a British cutter of twenty guns; and so roughly did she handle the enemy, that he was glad to sheer off. A day or two later, the "Pickering" overhauled the "Golden Eagle," a large schooner of twenty-two guns and fifty-seven men. The action which followed was ended by the schooner striking her flag. A prize crew was then put aboard the "Golden Eagle," and she was ordered to follow in the wake of her captor. Three days later the British sloop-of-war "Achilles" hove in sight, and gave chase to the privateer and her prize. After a fifteen hours' chase the prize was overhauled; and the sloop-of-war, after taking possession of her, continued in pursuit of the privateer. But while the privateersmen had preferred flight to fighting while nothing was at stake, they did not propose to let their prize be taken from them without a resistance, however great the odds against them. Accordingly they permitted the "Achilles" to overhaul them, and a sharp action followed. The British tried to force the combat by boarding; but the Americans, with pikes and cutlasses, drove them back to their own ship. Then the two vessels separated, and during the rest of



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WHALE BOAT HOSTILITIES.

the conflict came no nearer each other than the length of a pistol-shot. At this distance they carried on a spirited cannonade for upwards of three hours, when the "Achilles," concluding that she had had enough, sheered off. Thereupon, the "Pickering" coolly ran back to her late prize, took possession of her, captured the lieutenant and prize crew that the "Achilles" had put in charge of her, and continued her cruise.

A good example of the Baltimore privateers was the "Revenge," mounting eighteen guns, with a crew of fifty men. In 1780 this vessel was commanded by Capt. Alexander Murray of the regular navy. She was engaged by a large number of Baltimore merchants to convoy a fleet of merchantmen, but had hardly started to sea with her charges when she fell in with a fleet of British vessels, and was forced to retreat up the Patuxent River. While there, the American fleet was strengthened by several privateers and armed merchant-vessels which joined it, so that it was felt safe to try again to get to sea. Accordingly the attempt was made; but, though the captains of the fleet had signed a solemn compact to stand together in case of the danger, the sudden appearance of a fleet of hostile armed vessels sent all scurrying up the Patuxent again, except one brig and a schooner. The British fleet consisted of a ship of eighteen guns, a brig of sixteen, and three privateer schooners. Leaving the schooners to his two faithful consorts, Murray threw himself between the two larger vessels and the flying merchantmen. Seeing themselves thus balked of their prey, the enemy turned fiercely upon the "Revenge," but were met with so spirited a resistance, that they hauled off after an hour's fighting. The other American vessels behaved equally well, and the discomfiture of the British was complete.

Philadelphia, though not looked upon as a centre of privateering activity, furnished one privateer that made a notable record. This was the "Holkar," sixteen guns. In April, 1780, she captured a British schooner of ten guns; and in May of the same year she fought a desperate action with a British privateer brig, the name of which has never been ascertained. Twice the Briton sheered off to escape the telling fire of the American; but the "Holkar" pressed him closely, and only the appearance

of a second British armed vessel at the scene of the action saved the Englishman from capture. This battle was one of the most sanguinary ever fought by private armed vessels; for of the crew of the "Holkar" six were killed and sixteen wounded, including the captain and first lieutenant, while of the enemy there were about the same number killed and twenty wounded. Three months later this same privateer fell in with the British sixteen-gun cutter "Hypocrite," and captured her after a sharp conflict.

Perhaps the most audacious privateering exploit was that of the privateers "Hero," "Hope," and "Swallow," in July, 1782. The captains of these craft, meeting after an unprofitable season upon the high seas, conceived the idea of making a descent upon the Nova Scotian town of Lunenberg, some thirty-five miles from Halifax. Little time was wasted in discussion. Privateers are not hampered by official red tape. So it happened that early in the month the three privateers appeared off the harbor of the threatened town, having landed a shore party of ninety men. Before the invaders the inhabitants retreated rapidly, making some slight resistance. Two block-houses, garrisoned by British regulars, guarded the town. One of these fortresses the Americans burned, whereupon the British established themselves in the second, and prepared to stand a siege. Luckily for the Americans, the block-house was within range of the harbor; so that the three privateers took advantageous positions, and fired a few rounds of solid shot into the enemy's wooden citadel. The besieged then made haste to raise the white flag, and surrendered themselves prisoners-of-war. When the Yankee ships left the harbor, they took with them a large quantity of merchandise and provisions, and a thousand pounds sterling by way of ransom.

One more conflict, in which the irregular naval forces of the United States did credit to themselves, must be described before dismissing the subject of privateering. In September, 1781, the British sloop-of-war "Savage" was cruising off the southern coast of the United States. Her officers and men were in a particularly good humor, and felt a lively sense of self-satisfaction; for they had just ascended the Potomac, and

plundered Gen. Washington's estate, — an exploit which would make them heroes in the eyes of their admiring countrymen.

Off Charleston the "Savage" encountered the American privateer "Congress," of about the same strength as herself, — twenty guns and one hundred and fifty men. In one respect the "Congress" was the weaker; for her crew was composed largely of landsmen, and her marines were a company of militia, most of whom were sadly afflicted with seasickness. Nevertheless, the Yankee craft rushed boldly into action, opening fire with her bow-chasers as soon as she came within range. Like two savage bull-dogs, the two ships rushed at each other, disdaining all manœuvring, and seemingly intent only upon locking in a deadly struggle, yard-arm to yard-arm. At first the "Savage" won a slight advantage. Swinging across the bow of the "Congress," she raked her enemy twice. But soon the two ships lay side by side, and the thunder of the cannon was constant. The militia-marines on the "Congress" did good service. Stationed in the tops, on the forecastle, the quarter-deck, and every elevated place on the ship, they poured down upon the deck of the enemy a murderous fire. The jackies at the great guns poured in broadsides so well directed that soon the "Savage" had not a rope left with which to manage the sails. Her quarter-deck was cleared, and not a man was to be seen to serve as a mark for the American gunners. So near lay the two vessels to each other, that the fire from the guns scorched the gunners on the opposite ship. The antagonists were inextricably entangled; for the mizzen-mast of the "Savage" had been shot away, and had fallen into the after-rigging of the "Congress." There was no flight for the weaker vessel. When she could no longer fight, surrender was her only recourse. Neither vessel showed any colors, for both ensigns had been shot away early in the action. Accordingly, when the boatswain of the "Savage" was seen upon the forecastle wildly waving his arms, it was taken as an evidence of surrender; and the fire slackened until his voice could be heard.

"Give us quarter," he cried hoarsely; "we are a wreck, and strike our flag."

The firing then ceased; but, when the lieutenant of the "Congress"

ordered a boat lowered in which to board the prize, the old boatswain came back with the report, —

"Boats all knocked to pieces, sir. Couldn't find one that would float."

Accordingly the two vessels had to be slowly drawn together, and the boarding party reached the deck of the prize by clambering over a spar which served as a bridge. When they reached the prize, they found her decks covered with dead and wounded men. The slaughter had been terrible. Twenty-three men were killed, and thirty-one wounded. On the "Congress" were thirty, killed and wounded together. One of the wounded Americans was found lying with his back braced against the foot of the bowsprit, cheering for the victory, and crying, —

"If they have broken my legs, my hands and heart are still whole."

Throughout this sanguinary action both parties showed the greatest courage and determination. Two vessels of the two most perfectly organized regular navies in the world could not have been better handled, nor could they have more stubbornly contested for the victory.

A class of armed vessels outside the limits of the regular navy, but very active and efficient in the service of the country, was the maritime forces of the individual states. Before Congress had seen the necessity for a naval force, several of the colonies had been alive to the situation, and fitted out cruisers of their own. Even after the Revolution had developed into a war of the first magnitude, and after the colonies had assumed the title of states, and delegated to Congress the duty of providing for the common defence, they still continued to fit out their own men-of-war to protect their ports and act as convoys for their merchant fleets. Though vessels in this service seldom cruised far from the coast of their home colony, yet occasionally they met the vessels of the enemy, and many sharp actions were fought by them.

Of all the actions fought by the State cruisers, the most hotly contested was that between the Pennsylvania cruiser "Hyder Ali," and the British sloop-of-war "Gen. Monk." The "Hyder Ali" was a merchantman, bought by the state just as she was about departing on a voyage to

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DECATUR BOARDING A TRIPOLITAN CORSAIR.

the West Indies. She was in no way calculated for a man-of-war; but the need was pressing, and she was pierced for eight ports on a side, and provided with a battery of six-pounders. The command of this vessel was given to Joshua Barney, a young officer with an extensive experience of Yankee privateers and British prisons, and whose later exploits in the United States navy are familiar to readers of "Blue-Jackets of 1812."

Barney's instructions were, not to go to sea, but to patrol the Delaware River and Bay, and see that no privateer lay in wait for the merchant-vessels that cleared from the port of Philadelphia. In April, 1782, the "Hyder Ali" stood down Delaware Bay at the head of a large fleet of outward-bound merchantmen. When Cape May was reached, strong head-winds sprang up, and the whole fleet anchored to await more favorable weather before putting out to sea. While they lay at anchor, the "Hyder Ali" sighted a trio of British vessels, two ships and a brig, rounding the cape. Instantly Barney signalled his convoy to trip anchor and retreat, a signal which was promptly obeyed by all save one too daring craft, that tried to slip round the cape, and get to sea, but fell into the hands of the enemy. Soon the whole fleet, with the "Hyder Ali" bringing up the rear, fled up the bay. The British followed in hot pursuit.

At a point half-way up the bay the pursuers parted; one of the ships, a frigate, cutting through a side channel in the hope of intercepting the fugitives. The other two pursuers, a privateer brig and a sloop-of-war, continued in the wake of the "Hyder Ali." The brig proved herself a clipper, and soon came up with the American vessel, which promptly offered battle. The challenge was declined by the privateer, which fired a harmless broadside, and continued on up the bay. Barney let her pass, for he had determined to risk the dangers of an unequal combat with the sloop-of-war. This vessel came up rapidly; and as she drew near Barney luffed up suddenly, and let fly a broadside. This somewhat staggered the enemy, who had expected only a tame surrender; but she quickly recovered, and came boldly on. At this juncture Barney turned to his helmsman, and said, —

"Now, when I give the word, pay no attention to my order, but put

the helm hard-a-starboard. Pay no heed to the actual command I may give you."

The British vessel was then within half pistol-shot, and her forward guns were beginning to bear. From his station on the quarter-deck Barney shouted to his steersman in stentorian tones, —

"Port your helm. Hard-a-port."

The order was clearly heard on board the enemy, and he prepared to manœuvre his ship accordingly. But the steersman of the "Hyder Ali" remembered his instructions; and before the enemy discovered the ruse, the American ship lay athwart the other's bow, and the bowsprit of the enemy was caught in the "Hyder Ali's" rigging, giving the latter a raking position. Quickly the Yankee gunners seized the opportunity. Not five miles away was a British frigate ready to rush to the assistance of her consort, and whatever was to be done by the bold lads of Pennsylvania had to be done with expedition. No cheer rose from their ranks; but with grim determination they worked at the great guns, pouring in rapid and effective broadsides. The explosions of the two batteries were like the deafening peals of thunder echoed and re-echoed in some mountain-gorge. Smoke hid the vessels from sight, and the riflemen in the tops could only occasionally catch sight of the figures of the enemy. The enemy had twenty guns to Barney's sixteen; but he was outmanœuvred at the start, and this disadvantage he never overcame. Half an hour from the time of the opening of the battle, his flag was struck, and the Americans, with lusty cheers, took possession of their prize. There was no time for ceremony. The frigate had seen the conflict from afar, and was bearing down upon the two antagonists. So without even asking the name of the captured vessel, Barney hastily threw a prize crew aboard, ordered her to proceed to Philadelphia, and himself remained behind to cover the retreat.

Some hours later, having escaped the British frigate, the two vessels sailed up to a Philadelphia wharf. The scars of battle had been in no way healed: the tattered sails, the shattered hulls and bulwarks, the cordage hanging loosely from the masts, told the story of battle. The crowd

that rushed to the wharf, and peered curiously about the decks of the two vessels, saw a ghastly and horrible sight. For the battle had been as sanguinary as it was spirited, and the dead still lay where they fell. On the British vessel, the "Gen. Monk," lay the lifeless bodies of twenty men; while twenty-six wounded, whose blood stained the deck, lay groaning in the cockpit below. On the "Hyder Ali" were four killed and eleven wounded.

This action, for steadiness and brilliancy, was not surpassed by any naval duel of the war of the Revolution. By it the name of Joshua Barney was put upon a plane with those of the most eminent commanders in the regular navy; and had not the war speedily terminated, he would have been granted a commission and a ship by the United States.

While the chief naval events of the war for independence have now been recounted, there still remain certain incidents connected more or less closely with the war on the water, which deserve a passing mention. One of these is the curious desultory warfare carried on in and about New York Harbor by fishermen and longshoremen in whale-boats, dories, sharpies, and similar small craft.

From 1776 until the close of the war, New York City and the region bordering upon the harbor were occupied by the British. Provisions were needed for their support, and were brought from Connecticut and New Jersey in small sailing craft, chiefly whale-boats. These boats the patriots often intercepted, and desperate encounters upon the water were frequent. Nor did the Yankee boatmen confine their attacks to the provision boats alone. In the summer of 1775 the British transport "Blue Mountain Valley" was captured by a band of hardy Jerseymen, who concealed themselves in the holds of four small sail-boats until fairly alongside the enemy's vessel, when they swarmed out and drove the British from the deck of their vessel.

Two New Jersey fishermen, Adam Hyler and William Marriner, were particularly active in this class of warfare. Twice the British sent armed forces to capture them, and, failing in that, burned their boats. But the sturdy patriots were undaunted, and building new boats, waged a relentless

war against the followers of King George. Every Tory that fished in the bay was forced to pay them tribute; and many of these gentry, so obnoxious to the Yankees, were visited in their homes at dead of night, and solemnly warned to show more moderation in their disapproval of the American cause. When the occasion offered, the two Jerseymen gathered armed bands, and more than one small British vessel fell a prey to their midnight activity. Two British corvettes were captured by them in Coney Island Bay, and burned to the water's edge. With one of the blazing vessels forty thousand dollars in specie was destroyed, — a fact that Hyler bitterly lamented when he learned of it.

No narrative of the events of the Revolution would be complete without some description of the floating prison-houses in which the British immured the hapless soldiers and sailors who fell into their hands. Of these the chief one was a dismasted hulk known as the "Old Jersey" prison-ship, and moored in Wallabout Bay near New York City. No pen can adequately describe the horrors of this prison; but some extracts from the published recollections of men once imprisoned in her noisome hold will give some idea of the miserable fate of those condemned to be imprisoned on her.

Thomas Andros, a sailor taken by the British with the privateer "Fair American," writes of the "Old Jersey:" "This was an old sixty-four-gun ship, which, through age, had become unfit for further actual service. She was stripped of every spar and all her rigging. After a battle with a French fleet, her lion figure-head was taken away to repair another ship. No appearance of ornament was left, and nothing remained but an old unsightly rotten hulk; and doubtless no other ship in the British navy ever proved the means of the destruction of so many human beings. It is computed that no less than eleven thousand American seamen perished in her. When I first became an inmate of this abode of suffering, despair, and death, there were about four hundred prisoners on board; but in a short time they amounted to twelve hundred. In a short time we had two hundred or more sick and dying lodged in the forepart of the lower gun-deck, where all the prisoners were confined at night. Utter derangement

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"OLD JERSEY" PRISON SHIP.

was a common symptom of yellow-fever; and to increase the horror of the darkness that surrounded us (for we were allowed no light between decks), the voice of warning would be heard, 'Take heed to yourselves. There is a madman stalking through the ship with a knife in his hand.' I sometimes found the man a corpse in the morning, by whose side I laid myself down at night. In the morning the hatchways were thrown open; and we were allowed to ascend on the upper deck all at once, and remain on the upper deck all day. But the first object that met our view in the morning was an appalling spectacle, — a boat loaded with dead bodies, conveying them to the Long Island shore, where they were very slightly covered."

Ebenezer Fox, another privateersman, has left his recollections of this dreadful prison. His description of the food upon which the unhappy prisoners were forced to subsist is interesting: —

"Our bill of fare was as follows: on Sunday, one pound of biscuit, one pound of pork, and half a pint of pease; Monday, one pound of biscuit, one pint of oatmeal, and two ounces of butter; Tuesday, one pound of biscuit, and two pounds of salt beef; Wednesday, one and a half pounds of flour, and two ounces of suet; Thursday was a repetition of Sunday's fare; Friday, of Monday's; and Saturday, of Tuesday's.

"If this food had been of good quality and properly cooked, as we had no labor to perform, it would have kept us comfortable, at least from suffering; but this was not the case. All our food appeared to be damaged. As for the pork, we were cheated out of it more than half the time; and when it was obtained, one would have judged from its motley hues, exhibiting the consistence and appearance of variegated fancy soap, that it was the flesh of the porpoise or sea-hog, and had been an inhabitant of the ocean rather than of the stye. The pease were generally damaged, and, from the imperfect manner in which they were cooked, were about as indigestible as grape-shot. The butter the reader will not suppose was the real 'Goshen;' and had it not been for its adhesive properties to hold together the particles of the biscuit, that had been so riddled by

the worms as to lose all their attraction of cohesion, we should have considered it no desirable addition to our viands."

But it is unnecessary to prolong the painful description of the horrors of this floating charnel house. Its name and record must ever rest as a dark stain upon the name of England. It is seldom possible in war-time to house and care for the immense hordes of prisoners-of-war with the same regard for their comfort which is shown ordinarily to convicted felons. War is brutal; it is unfeeling, and the weaker party must always suffer. But such sufferings as those of the "Old Jersey" captives can be excused upon no ground. There was no need to crowd hundreds of men into a space hardly large enough for a few score. To starve her prisoners, should not be part of a great nation's policy. The one plea which England can urge in extenuation of the "Old Jersey" is that it had its day at a time when those broad principles of humanity, now so generally accepted, had not yet been applied to the rules of war.

With this chapter ends the narrative of the naval events of the war of the Revolution. It was not a great naval war, for the belligerent nations were not sufficiently well matched in naval strength. But it brought forth Paul Jones and more than one other brave and able commander. It established a new flag upon the seas, a flag that has ever since held an honorable position among the insignia of the foremost nations of the earth. And in the war of the Revolution, as in every war in which the United States has taken part since, there was manifested the wonderful ability of the American people to rush into a conflict half prepared, and gain daily in strength until the cause for which they fight is won. In 1776 that cause was liberty, and in its behalf none fought more bravely than the lads who wore the blue jackets of the American navy.

CHAPTER XV.

THE NAVY DISBANDED. — AGGRESSIONS OF BARBARY CORSAIRS. — A DISGRACEFUL TRIBUTE. — BAINBRIDGE AND THE DEY. — GEN. EATON AT TUNIS. A SQUADRON SENT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN. — — DECATUR AND THE SPANIARDS. — THE "ENTERPRISE" AND THE "TRIPOLI." — AMERICAN SLAVES IN ALGIERS.

PEACE having been signed with Great Britain in 1783, the nucleus of a navy then in existence was disbanded. Partly this was due to the disinclination of the sturdy Republicans to keep a standing establishment, either naval or military, in time of peace. The same tendency of the American mind to disregard the adage, "In time of peace, prepare for war," is observable to-day. But the chief reason for the dissolution of the navy lay in the impossibility of collecting funds to pay for its maintenance. The states had formed themselves into a confederacy, but so jealously had each state guarded its individual rights, that no power was left to the general government. The navy being a creation of the general government, was therefore left without means of support; and in 1785 the last remaining frigate, the "Alliance," was sold because there was not enough money in the treasury to pay for her needed repairs.

For eight years thereafter the nation remained without a navy. But gradually there sprung up a very considerable maritime commerce under the flag of the United States. The stars and stripes began to be a familiar sight in sea-ports as far away as China and Japan. But as far as it afforded any protection to the vessel above which it waved, that banner might have been a meaningless bit of striped bunting. In 1785 the Dey of Algiers, looking to piracy for his income, sent his piratical cruisers out into the Atlantic to seize upon the merchantmen of the new nation that

had no navy to enforce its authority. Two vessels were captured, and their crews sold into disgraceful slavery in Algiers.

When the first Congress of the United States under the present Constitution assembled, President Washington called the attention of the law-makers to the crying need for a navy. But war had set in between Portugal and Algiers; the Algerian corsairs were blockaded in their ports, and American vessels were enjoying a temporary immunity from piratical attack. Therefore Congress hesitated.

But in 1793 peace was suddenly arranged between Portugal and Algiers. Immediately the corsairs swarmed out of the Mediterranean Sea, and swooped down upon the American merchantmen. In a few weeks four ships were in their hands, and the gangs of white slaves in Tunis and Tripoli were re-enforced by nearly two hundred luckless Yankee sailors. Then Congress awoke, and ordered the immediate building of six frigates. The ships were laid down, the work was well under way, naval officers had been appointed, and every thing seemed to point to the revival of the American navy, when a treaty was negotiated with Algiers, and all work was stopped.

And what a treaty it was! By it the United States relinquished every claim to the rights of a sovereign nation. It agreed to pay an annual tribute to the piratical Dey, in consideration of his granting to American vessels the right of travel on the high seas. And when some slight delay occurred in making the first payment of tribute, the obsequious government presented the Barbary corsair with a frigate, to allay his wrath.

We must pass hastily over the time during which this iniquitous treaty was in force. Suffice it to say, that by it the United States paid the Dey more than a million dollars. For the same sum his piratical establishment might have been scattered like the sands of the desert.

In May, 1800, it fell to the lot of Capt. William Bainbridge, commanding the frigate "George Washington," to carry the annual tribute to Algiers. On arriving there he was treated with contempt by the Dey, who demanded that he put the "Washington" at the service of Algiers, to carry her ambassador to Constantinople. "You pay me tribute, by which you

become my slaves," said the Dey; "I have therefore a right to order you as I may think proper."

Bainbridge protested, but to no avail. He had anchored his frigate under the guns of the Dey's castle, and to disobey meant capture and slavery. Accordingly he complied, but despatched a letter to the authorities at home, saying, "I hope I may never again be sent to Algiers with tribute, unless I am authorized to deliver it from the mouth of our cannon."

When Bainbridge reached the United States, after faithfully discharging the errand of the Dey, he found that it was unlikely that either he or any other officer would be forced to carry any further tribute to the Barbary pirates. For, while the tribute paid to Algiers had merely changed the attitude of that country from open hostility to contemptuous forbearance, it had brought the other Barbary states clamoring to the United States for tribute. Tunis and Tripoli demanded blood-money; and each emphasized its demand by capturing a few Yankee merchantmen, and selling their crews into slavery.

The agents or ambassadors sent by the United States to these powers were treated with the utmost contempt; and while their lives were often in danger, their property was always considered the fair prey of the Barbarian ruler to whose domain they were sent. To Tunis was sent Gen. William Eaton, an American politician, who has left a record of his experiences in the land of the Bey. Some of the entries in his journal are very pithy. Thus under the date of Aug. 11, 1799, he wrote, —

"Some good friend had informed the Bey that I had an elegant Grecian mirror in my house. To-day he sent a request for it, pretending that he wanted it for the cabin of his pleasure-boat, now about to be launched. So it is. If the consuls have a good piece of furniture, or any other good thing which strikes the Bey's fancy, he never hesitates to ask for it; and they have no alternative but to give it. They have suffered this to become usance also.

"12th. Sent the Bey the mirror."

A letter from Gen. Eaton to the Secretary of State, in 1801, tells of the capacity of the Bey. A fire in the regal palace destroyed fifty thousand

stand of small-arms. The next day the monarch ordered Eaton to procure from the United States ten thousand stand to help make up the loss. Eaton demurred. "The Bey did not send for you to ask your advice," said the prime minister, "but to order you to communicate his demands to your Government."

Eaton still protested, pointed out the fact that the United States had already paid the Bey heavy tribute, and asked when these extortionate demands were to end.

"Never," was the cool response; and the interview ended.

But by this time the United States authorities had perceived the error they had committed in temporizing with the Barbary powers. They had quieted Algiers by the payment of a heavy tribute, and the gift of a frigate. But this had only excited the cupidity of the other petty states. Tunis demanded like tribute. The Bashaw of Tripoli, discontented with his share of the spoils, cut down the flag-staff before the American consulate, and sent out his cruisers to prey upon American commerce. Accordingly, on the 20th of May, 1801, the Secretary of the Navy ordered a squadron prepared to proceed to the Mediterranean, and bring the rapacious Arabs to terms.

The vessels chosen for this service were the "President," Commodore Richard Dale; "Philadelphia," Capt. Barron; "Essex," Capt. Bainbridge; and the schooner "Enterprise," Lieut.-Commandant Sterrett. Though the fleet in itself was powerful, the commodore was hampered by the timid and vacillating instructions of Congress. War had not been actually declared, and he was therefore to commit no overt act of hostility. The vessels of the fleet were to be employed simply to convoy American merchantmen in and out of the Mediterranean Sea, and to be in readiness to ward off any hostile action on the part of any of the Barbary powers.

On July 1 the fleet entered the roadstead at Gibraltar, and anchored in the shadow of the famous rock. Here the Americans found two of the most rapacious of the Tripolitan corsairs lying at anchor; one a ship of twenty-six guns under the command of the Tripolitan admiral, and the

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THE SQUADRON LEAVING THE MEDITERRANEAN.

other a brig of sixteen guns. To keep an eye on these piratical worthies, the "Philadelphia" was ordered to remain at Gibraltar, while the other vessels scattered. The "Essex" was ordered to cruise along the northern shore of the Mediterranean, gathering up all the American merchantmen, and convoying them to sea. The "President" and the "Enterprise" made sail for Algiers, to convince the ruler of that country that it would be impolitic for him to declare war against the United States at that time. The desired effect was produced; for the sight of an American frigate did more to tone down the harshness of the Dey's utterances, than could the most extortionate tribute.

The cruise of the "Essex" was uneventful, save for a dispute between the officers of the American man-of-war and a Spanish xebec in the roads of Barcelona. The trouble arose in this wise:—

The "Essex," though a small vessel, was perfectly appointed, of handsome model and appearance, and her crew was drilled to the highest possible state of discipline and efficiency. When she cast anchor at Barcelona, she straightway became the talk of the town, and her officers became the lions of the hour, vastly to the disgust of the Spaniards on the xebec lying in the same port. Accordingly they took every opportunity to annoy the Americans, challenging the boats of the "Essex" as they passed the xebec, and not scrupling to use abusive language to Capt. Bainbridge himself. One night a boat, under command of Lieut. Stephen Decatur, was brought under the guns of the xebec, and held there while the Spaniards shouted insults from the deck above. Decatur called for the officer in command, and remonstrated with him, but receiving no satisfaction, ordered his men to shove off, declaring he would call again in the morning.

Accordingly, in the forenoon of the following day, a boat from the "Essex," with Decatur in the stern-sheets, made for the Spanish vessel. Coming alongside, Decatur went on board, and asked for the officer who had been in command the night previous. He was told that the man he sought had gone ashore.

"Well, then," thundered Decatur, in tones that could be heard all

over the vessel, "tell him that Lieut. Decatur of the frigate 'Essex' pronounces him a cowardly scoundrel, and when they meet on shore he will cut his ears off." And having thrown this bombshell into the enemy's camp, Decatur returned to his ship.

The duel was never fought, for the civil authorities bestirred themselves to prevent it. But the matter was taken up by the United States minister to Spain, who never permitted it to rest until the fullest apology was made by Spain for the indignities to which the American naval officers had been subjected.

After having collected a large number of merchantmen, and taken them safely out of the reach of Tripolitan cruisers, the "Essex" showed her colors in the chief Barbary ports, and rejoined the flagship in time to return to the United States in December.

While the "Essex" had been thus pacificly employed, the little schooner "Enterprise" had carried off the honors by fighting the first and only pitched battle of the year. This little craft, after accompanying the "President" to Algiers, was ordered to Malta. While on the way thither she fell in with a polacre-rigged ship flying the Tripolitan colors. Closer inspection showed her to be a notorious corsair, well known for the constant and merciless warfare she waged upon American merchantmen. The stars and stripes, floating at the peak of the American man-of-war, alarmed the Moors, and they opened fire without waiting for a hail. The "Enterprise" took up a position alongside, and at a distance of less than a pistol-shot. Broadside succeeded broadside in rapid succession. The aim of the Americans was better than that of the enemy, and the effect of their fire was observable whenever the breeze cleared away the dense smoke that hid the vessels from each other. But the ordnance of both was light, so that the combat was greatly prolonged. The vessels were almost equally matched; for the "Enterprise" carried twelve guns and ninety men, while the Tripolitan mounted fourteen guns, and had a crew of eighty-five men.

For two hours the battle continued, and the roar of the cannon and the rattle of small-arms were incessant. The day was calm and clear, with

the still, warm air prevalent in the Mediterranean. Hardly was the breeze strong enough to carry away the sulphurous cloud of smoke that formed the one blot on the fair surface of the fairest of all seas. At last the Americans noticed that the fire of the enemy had ceased. Eagerly they peered through the smoke, and when the outline of their adversary could be made out, three ringing cheers told that the Tripolitan flag waved no longer in its place. Leaving their guns, the Americans were preparing to board the prize, when they were astonished to receive another broadside, and see the colors of their adversary again hoisted.

With cries of rage the Yankee seamen again went to quarters; and, if they had fought boldly before, they now fought viciously. They cared little to take the prize: their chief end was to send her, and the treacherous corsairs that manned her, to the bottom. The Tripolitans in their turn exerted every energy to conquer. Bringing their vessel alongside the "Enterprise," they strove repeatedly to board, only to be beaten back again and again. Finally, after receiving two raking broadsides from the "Enterprise," she again struck her flag.

This time Capt. Sterrett was in no haste to consider the combat ended. Keeping his men at the guns, he ordered the Tripolitan to come under the quarter of the "Enterprise." But no sooner had the enemy done so than she renewed the conflict for the third time, by attempting to board.

"No quarter for the treacherous dogs," was then the cry on the American vessel. "Fight on, and send them to the bottom."

The rest of the battle was wholly in favor of the "Enterprise." Several times she raked her antagonist, doing great execution. Many shots took effect between wind and water; and the cry arose on the decks of the Tripolitan, that she was sinking. The "Enterprise" kept at a safe distance, and by skilful sailing chose her own position, so that she could pour in a deliberate and murderous fire. Bitterly were the Tripolitans punished for their treachery. Their decks ran red with blood, half of their officers were shot down, the cries of their wounded rose shrill above the thunder of the cannon. Her flag was struck, but to this the American gunners

paid no heed. The repeated treachery of the corsairs had left in the minds of the Yankee sailors but one thought, — to send the ship to the bottom, and rid the ocean of so pestiferous a craft.

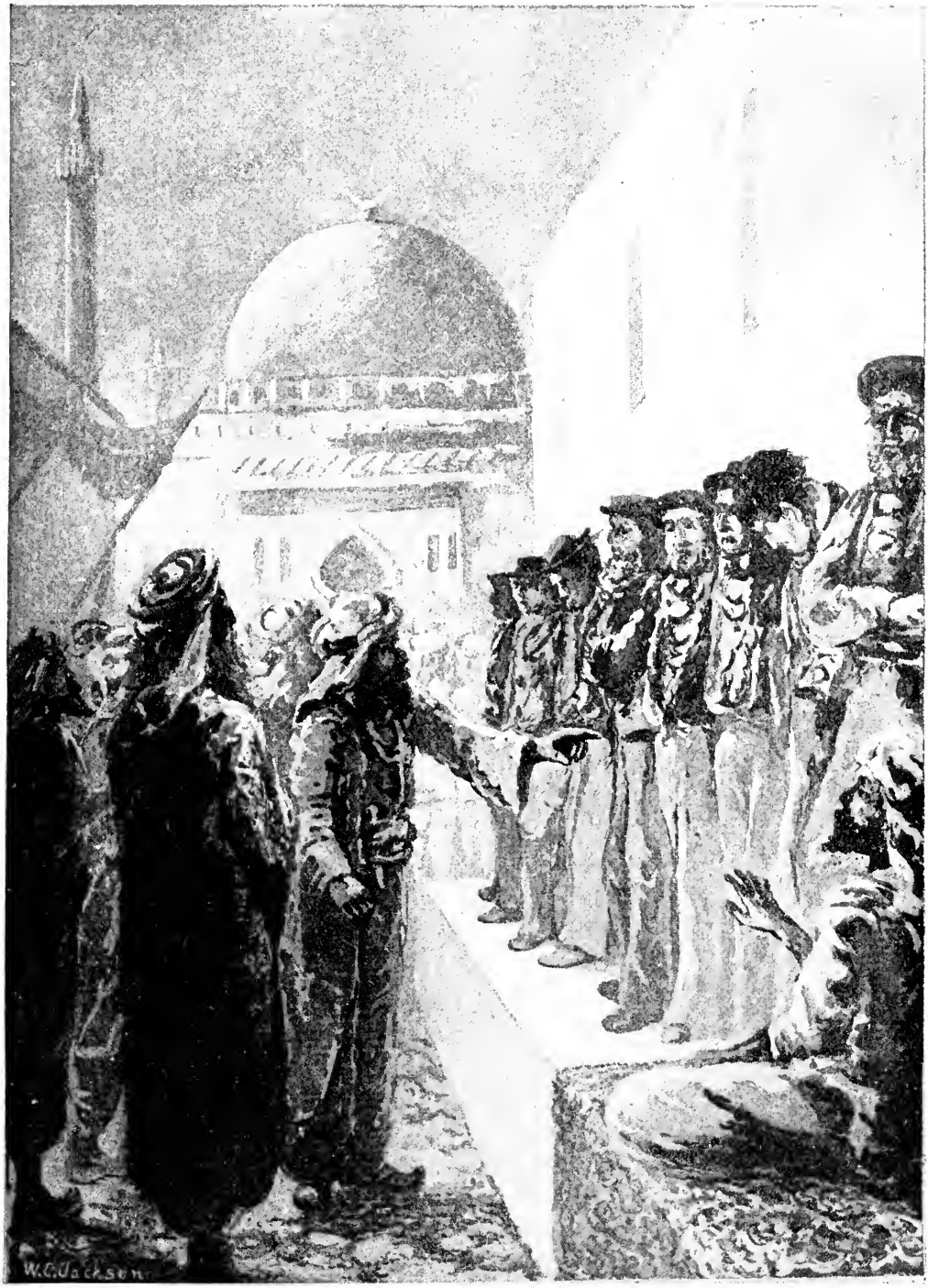
But, enraged though they were, the Americans could not wholly cast aside their feelings of humanity. Though they had been twice deceived, they could not keep up their attack upon a vessel so sorely stricken as to be unable to respond to their fire. And when at last the commander of the Tripolitan, a venerable old man with a flowing beard, appeared in the waist of the ship, sorely wounded, and, bowing submissively, cast the colors of his vessel into the sea, then the fire of the "Enterprise" ceased, although the usages of war would have justified the Americans in exterminating their treacherous foe.

Having captured his enemy, Capt. Sterrett was in some uncertainty as to what to do with it. The instructions under which he sailed gave him no authority to take prizes. After some deliberation, he concluded to rob the captured vessel, which proved to be the "Tripoli," of her power for evil. Accordingly he sent Lieut. David Porter, the daring naval officer of whose exploits we have already spoken in the "Blue-Jackets of 1812," on board the prize, with instructions to dismantle her. Porter carried out his instructions admirably. With immense satisfaction the jackies he took with him forced the Tripolitans to cut away their masts, throw overboard all their cannon, cutlasses, pistols, and other arms; cut their sails to pieces; throw all ammunition into the sea, and, to use a nautical expression, "strip the ship to a girtline." One jury-mast and small sail alone was left.

Porter then pointed out to the crestfallen Tripolitan captain, Mahomet Sons, that the "Enterprise" had not lost a man in the action, while of the corsairs not less than fifty were either killed or wounded.

"Go," said he sternly to the cowering Mussulman, "go tell the Bashaw of Tripoli, and the people of your country, that in future they may expect only a tribute of powder and ball from the sailors of the United States."

Amid the jeers and execrations of the Yankee tars, the crippled



PAGE 259.—BLUE JACKETS OF '76.

AMERICANS ENSLAVED IN TRIPOLI.

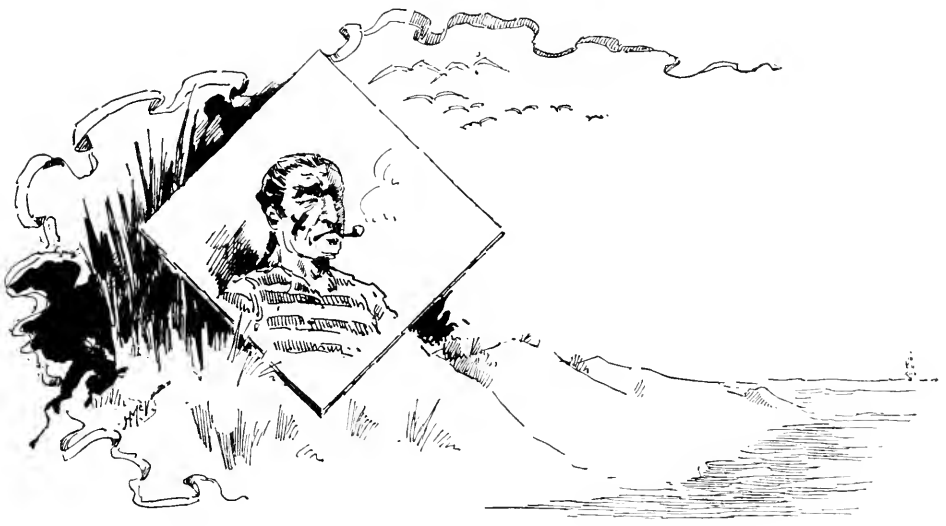
Tripolitan hulk, with her dead and dying, drifted slowly away. When she reached Tripoli, the anger of the Bashaw was unappeasable. He had expected his cruiser to return freighted deep with plunder, and crowded with American slaves. She had returned a dismantled hulk. In vain her commander showed his wounds to his wrathful master, and told of the size of his enemy, and the vigor of his resistance. The rage of the Bashaw demanded a sacrifice, and the luckless Mahomet Sons was led through the streets of Tripoli tied to a jackass. This in itself was the deepest degradation possible for a Mussulman, but the Bashaw supplemented it with five hundred bastinadoes well laid on. This severe punishment, together with the repeated assertions of the sailors of the defeated ship, that the dogs of Christians had fired enchanted shot, so terrified the seafaring people of Tripoli that it was almost impossible for the Bashaw to muster a ship's crew for a year after.

The battle between the "Enterprise" and the "Tripoli" alone saved the first year of the war from being entirely puerile. Certain it is that the distinguished naval officers who accompanied the fleet to the Mediterranean were so hedged about with political red tape, that they were powerless to take a step in defence of the honor of their country. While they were empowered to rescue any American ship that might be discovered in the grasp of a corsair, they were powerless to attempt the rescue of the hundreds of Americans held by Bashaw, Bey, and Dey as slaves. Commodore Dale, indeed, through diplomacy, managed to free a few of the enslaved Americans. Having blockaded the harbor of Tripoli with the frigate "President," he captured a Greek vessel having a score or more of Tripolitan soldiers aboard. He then sent word to the Bashaw that he would exchange these prisoners for an equal number of Americans; but the monarch apparently cared little for his subjects, for he replied that he would not give one American slave for the whole lot. After much argument, an exchange was made upon the basis of three Tripolitans to one Yankee.

It is hard, even at this late day, to regard the policy of the United States towards the Barbary powers with feelings other than of mortification.

Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers, and Morocco constantly preyed on our commerce, and enslaved our sailors. In the streets of Algiers worked American slaves, chained together, and wearing iron collars upon their necks. Their lives were the property of their owners, and they suffered unheard of privations and tortures. Yet at this very time the United States kept a consul in Algiers, and maintained friendly relations with the Dey. Indeed, a historian writing in 1795 applauds the American Government for the care it took of its citizens enslaved in Algiers, by providing each with a suit of clothing yearly!

But the continued aggressions and extortionate demands of the Barbary powers became at last unbearable. The expedition to the Mediterranean, under Commodore Dale, was but the premonitory muttering before the storm. Dale returned to the United States in December, 1801, and his report led to the organization of the naval expedition that was to finally crush the piratical powers of Barbary.



CHAPTER XVI.

MORE VIGOROUS POLICY. — COMMODORE MORRIS SENT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN. — PORTER'S CUTTING-OUT EXPEDITION. — COMMODORE PREBLE SENT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN. — HIS ENCOUNTER WITH A BRITISH MAN-OF-WAR. — THE LOSS OF THE "PHILADELPHIA." — DECATUR'S DARING ADVENTURE.

THE return of Commodore Dale from the Mediterranean, and the reports which he brought of the continued aggressions and insolence of the Barbary powers, made a very marked change in the temper of the people of the United States. Early in 1802 Congress passed laws, which, though not in form a formal declaration of war, yet permitted the vigorous prosecution of hostilities against Tripoli, Algiers, or any other of the Barbary powers. A squadron was immediately ordered into commission for the purpose of chastising the corsairs, and was put under the command of Commodore Morris. The vessels detailed for this service were the "Chesapeake," thirty-eight; "Constellation," thirty-eight; "New York," thirty-six; "John Adams," twenty-eight; "Adams," twenty-eight; and "Enterprise," twelve. Some months were occupied in getting the vessels into condition for sea; and while the

"Enterprise" started in February for the Mediterranean, it was not until September that the last ship of the squadron followed her. It will be remembered that the "Philadelphia" and "Essex," of Dale's squadron, had been left in the Mediterranean; and as the "Boston," twenty-eight, had been ordered to cruise in those waters after carrying United States Minister Livingstone to France, the power of the Western Republic was well supported before the coast-line of Barbary.

The "Enterprise" and the "Constellation" were the first of the squadron to reach the Mediterranean, and they straightway proceeded to Tripoli to begin the blockade of that port. One day, while the "Constellation" was lying at anchor some miles from the town, the lookout reported that a number of small craft were stealing along, close in shore, and evidently trying to sneak into the harbor. Immediately the anchor was raised, and the frigate set out in pursuit. The strangers proved to be a number of Tripolitan gun-boats, and for a time it seemed as though they would be cut off by the swift-sailing frigate. As they came within range, the "Constellation" opened a rapid and well-directed fire, which soon drove the gun-boats to protected coves and inlets in the shore. The Americans then lowered their boats with the intention of engaging the enemy alongshore, but at this moment a large body of cavalry came galloping out from town to the rescue. The Yankees, therefore, returned to their ship, and, after firing a few broadsides at the cavalry, sailed away.

Thereafter, for nearly a year, the record of the American squadron in the Mediterranean was uneventful. Commodore Morris showed little disposition to push matters to an issue, but confined his operations to sailing from port to port, and instituting brief and imperfect blockades.

In April, 1803, the squadron narrowly escaped being seriously weakened by the loss of the "New York." It was when this vessel was off Malta, on her way to Tripoli in company with the "John Adams" and the "Enterprise." The drums had just beat to grog; and the sailors, tin cup in hand, were standing in a line on the main deck waiting their turns at the grog-tub. Suddenly a loud explosion was heard, and the lower part of the ship was filled with smoke.

"The magazine is on fire," was the appalling cry; and for a moment confusion reigned everywhere. All knew that the explosion must have been near the magazine. There was no one to command, for at the grog hour the sailors are left to their own occupations. So the confusion spread, and there seemed to be grave danger of a panic, when Capt. Chauncey came on deck. A drummer passed hurriedly by him.

"Drummer, beat to quarters!" was the quick, sharp command of the captain. The drummer stopped short, and in a moment the resonant roll of the drum rose above the shouts and the tramping of feet. As the well-known call rose on the air, the men regained their self-control, and went quietly to their stations at the guns, as though preparing to give battle to an enemy.

When order had been restored, Capt. Chauncey commanded the boats to be lowered; but the effect of this was to arouse the panic again. The people rushed from the guns, and crowded out upon the bowsprit, the spritsail-yard, and the knightheads. Some leaped into the sea, and swam for the nearest vessel. All strove to get as far from the magazine as possible. This poltroonery disgusted Chauncey.

"Volunteers, follow me," he cried. "Remember, lads, it's just as well to be blown through three decks as one."

So saying he plunged down the smoky hatchway, followed by Lieut. David Porter and some other officers. Blinded and almost stifled by the smoke, they groped their way to the seat of the danger. With wet blankets, and buckets of water, they began to fight the flames. As their efforts began to meet with success, one of the officers went on deck, and succeeded in rallying the men, and forming two lines of water-carriers. After two hours' hard work, the ship was saved.

The explosion was a serious one, many of the bulkheads having been blown down, and nineteen officers and men seriously injured, of whom fourteen died. It came near leading to a still more serious blunder; for, when the flames broke out, the quartermaster was ordered to hoist the signal, "A fire on board." In his trepidation he mistook the signal, and announced, "A mutiny on board." Seeing this, Capt. Rodgers of the

"John Adams" beat his crew to quarters, and with shotted guns and open ports took up a raking position astern of the "New York," ready to quell the supposed mutiny. Luckily he discovered his error without causing loss of life.

For a month after this incident, the ships were detained at Malta making repairs; but, near the end of May, the "John Adams," "Adams," "New York," and "Enterprise" took up the blockade of Tripoli. One afternoon a number of merchant vessels succeeded in evading the blockaders, and though cut off from the chief harbor of the town, yet took refuge in the port of Old Tripoli. They were small lanteen-rigged feluccas of light draught; and they threaded the narrow channels, and skimmed over shoals whither the heavy men-of-war could not hope to follow them. Scarcely had they reached the shore when preparations were made for their defence against any cutting-out party the Americans might send for their capture. On the shore near the spot where the feluccas were beached, stood a heavy stone building, which was taken possession of by a party of troops hastily despatched from the city. The feluccas were laden with wheat, packed in sacks; and these sacks were taken ashore in great numbers, and piled up on either side of the great building so as to form breastworks. So well were the works planned, that they formed an almost impregnable fortress. Behind its walls the Tripolitans stood ready to defend their stranded vessels.

That night Lieut. Porter took a light boat, and carefully reconnoitred the position of the enemy. He was discovered, and driven away by a heavy fire of musketry, but not before he had taken the bearings of the feluccas and their defences. The next morning he volunteered to go in and destroy the boats, and, having obtained permission, set out, accompanied by Lieut. James Lawrence and a strong party of sailors. There was no attempt at concealment or surprise. The Americans pushed boldly forward, in the teeth of a heavy fire from the Tripolitans. No attempt was made to return the fire, for the enemy was securely posted behind his ramparts. The Yankees could only bend to their oars, and press forward with all possible speed. At last the beach was reached, and

boats-prows grated upon the pebbly sand. Quickly the jackies leaped from their places; and while some engaged the Tripolitans, others, torch in hand, clambered upon the feluccas, and set fire to the woodwork and the tarred cordage. When the flames had gained some headway, the incendiaries returned to their boats, and made for the squadron again, feeling confident that the Tripolitans could do nothing to arrest the conflagration. But they had underestimated the courage of the barbarians; for no sooner had the boats pushed off, than the Tripolitans rushed down to the shore, and strained every muscle for the preservation of their ships. The men-of-war rained grape-shot upon them; but they persevered, and before Porter and his followers regained their ships, the triumphant cries of the Tripolitans gave notice the flames were extinguished. Porter had been severely wounded in the thigh, and twelve or fifteen of his men had been killed or wounded; so that the failure of the expedition to fully accomplish its purpose was bitterly lamented. The loss of the enemy was never definitely ascertained, though several were seen to fall during the conflict. On both sides the most conspicuous gallantry was shown; the fighting was at times almost hand to hand, and once, embarrassed by the lack of ammunition, the Tripolitans seized heavy stones, and hurled them down upon their assailants.

For some weeks after this occurrence, no conflict took place between the belligerents. Commodore Morris, after vainly trying to negotiate a peace with Tripoli, sailed away to Malta, leaving the "John Adams" and the "Adams" to blockade the harbor. To them soon returned the "Enterprise," and the three vessels soon after robbed the Bey of his largest corsair.

On the night of the 21st of June, an unusual commotion about the harbor led the Americans to suspect that an attempt was being made to run the blockade. A strict watch was kept; and, before morning, the "Enterprise" discovered a large cruiser sneaking along the coast toward the harbor's mouth. The Tripolitan was heavy enough to have blown the Yankee schooner out of the water; but, instead of engaging her, she retreated to a small cove, and took up a favorable position for action.

Signals from the "Enterprise" soon brought the other United States vessels to the spot; while in response to rockets and signal guns from the corsair, a large body of Tripolitan cavalry came galloping down the beach, and a detachment of nine gunboats came to the assistance of the beleaguered craft.

No time was lost in manœuvring. Taking up a position within point-blank range, the "John Adams" and the "Enterprise" opened fire on the enemy, who returned it with no less spirit. For forty-five minutes the cannonade was unabated. The shot of the American gunners were seen to hull the enemy repeatedly, and at last the Tripolitans began to desert their ship. Over the rail and through the open ports the panic-stricken corsairs dropped into the water. The shot of the Yankees had made the ship's deck too hot a spot for the Tripolitans, and they fled with great alacrity. When the last had left the ship, the "John Adams" prepared to send boats to take possession of the prize. But at this moment a boat-load of Tripolitans returned to the corsair; and the Americans, thinking they were rallying, began again their cannonade. Five minutes later, while the boat's-crew was still on the Tripolitan ship, she blew up. The watchers heard a sudden deafening roar; saw a volcanic burst of smoke; saw rising high above the smoke the main and mizzen masts of the shattered vessel, with the yards, rigging, and hamper attached. When the smoke cleared away, only a shapeless hulk occupied the place where the proud corsair had so recently floated. What caused the explosion, cannot be told. Were it not for the fact that many of the Tripolitans were blown up with the ship, it might be thought that she had been destroyed by her own people.

After this encounter, the three United States vessels proceeded to Malta. Here Commodore Morris found orders for his recall, and he returned to the United States in the "Adams." In his place Commodore Preble had been chosen to command the naval forces; and that officer, with the "Constitution," forty-four, arrived in the Mediterranean in September, 1802. Following him at brief intervals came the other vessels of his squadron, — the "Vixen" twelve, "Siren" sixteen, and "Argus"

sixteen; the "Philadelphia" thirty-eight, and the "Nautilus" twelve, having reached the Mediterranean before the commodore. Three of these vessels were commanded by young officers, destined to win enduring fame in the ensuing war, — Stephen Decatur, William Bainbridge, and Richard Somers.

Before the last vessel of this fleet reached the Mediterranean, a disaster had befallen one of the foremost vessels, which cost the United States a good man-of-war, and forced a ship's crew of Yankee seamen to pass two years of their lives in the cells of a Tripolitan fortress. This vessel was the "Philadelphia," Capt. Bainbridge. She had reached the Mediterranean in the latter part of August, and signalled her arrival by overhauling and capturing the cruiser "Meshboha," belonging to the emperor of Morocco. With the cruiser was a small brig, which proved to be an American merchantman; and in her hold were found the captain and seven men, tied hand and foot. Morocco was then ostensibly on friendly terms with the United States, and Bainbridge demanded of the captain of the cruiser by what right he had captured an American vessel. To this the Moor returned, that he had done so, anticipating a war which had not yet been declared.

"Then, sir," said Bainbridge sternly, "I must consider you as a pirate, and shall treat you as such. I am going on deck for fifteen minutes. If, when I return, you can show me no authority for your depredations upon American commerce, I shall hang you at the yard-arm."

So saying, Bainbridge left the cabin. In fifteen minutes he returned, and, throwing the cabin doors open, stepped in with a file of marines at his heels. In his hand he held his watch, and he cast upon the Moor a look of stern inquiry. Not a word was said, but the prisoner understood the dread import of that glance. Nervously he began to unbutton the voluminous waistcoats which encircled his body, and from an inner pocket of the fifth drew forth a folded paper. It was a commission directing him to make prizes of all American craft that might come in his path. No more complete evidence of the treachery of Morocco could be desired. Bainbridge sent the paper to Commodore Preble, and, after stopping at

Gibraltar a day or two, proceeded to his assigned position off the harbor of Tripoli.

In the latter part of October, the lookout on the "Philadelphia" spied a vessel running into the harbor, and the frigate straightway set out in chase. The fugitive showed a clean pair of heels; and as the shots from the bow-chasers failed to take effect, and the water was continually shoaling before the frigate's bow, the helm was put hard down, and the frigate began to come about. But just at that moment she ran upon a shelving rock, and in an instant was hard and fast aground.

The Americans were then in a most dangerous predicament. The sound of the firing had drawn a swarm of gun-boats out of the harbor of Tripoli, and they were fast bearing down upon the helpless frigate. Every possible expedient was tried for the release of the ship, but to no avail. At last the gunboats, discovering her helpless condition, crowded so thick about her that there was no course open but to strike. And so, after flooding the magazine, throwing overboard all the small-arms, and knocking holes in the bottom of the ship, Bainbridge reluctantly surrendered.

Hardly had the flag touched the deck, when the gun-boats were alongside. If the Americans expected civilized treatment, they were sadly mistaken, for an undisciplined rabble came swarming over the taffrail. Lockers and chests were broken open, store-rooms ransacked, officers and men stripped of all the articles of finery they were wearing. It was a scene of unbridled pillage, in which the Tripolitan officers were as active as their men. An officer being held fast in the grasp of two of the Tripolitans, a third would ransack his pockets, and strip him of any property they might covet. Swords, watches, jewels, and money were promptly confiscated by the captors; and they even ripped the epaulets from the shoulders of the officers' uniforms. No resistance was made, until one of the pilferers tried to tear from Bainbridge an ivory miniature of his young and beautiful wife. Wresting himself free, the captain knocked down the vandal, and made so determined a resistance that his despoilers allowed him to keep the picture.

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CAPTURED BY THE ALGERINES

When all the portable property was in the hands of the victors, the Americans were loaded into boats, and taken ashore. It was then late at night; but the captives were marched through the streets to the palace of the Bashaw, and exhibited to that functionary. After expressing great satisfaction at the capture, the Bashaw ordered the sailors thrown into prison, while the officers remained that night as his guests. He entertained them with an excellent supper, but the next morning they were shown to the gloomy prison apartments that were destined to be their home until the end of the war. Of their life there we shall have more to say hereafter.

While this disaster had befallen the American cause before Tripoli, Commodore Preble in the flag-ship "Constitution," accompanied by the "Nautilus," had reached Gibraltar. There he found Commodore Rodgers, whom he was to relieve, with the "New York" and the "John Adams." Hardly had the commodore arrived, when the case of the captured Morocco ship "Meshboha" was brought to his attention; and he straightway went to Tangier to request the emperor to define his position with regard to the United States. Though the time of Commodore Rodgers on the Mediterranean station had expired, he consented to accompany Preble to Tangier; and the combined squadrons of the two commodores had so great an effect upon the emperor, that he speedily concluded a treaty. Commodore Rodgers then sailed for the United States, and Preble began his preparations for an active prosecution of the war with Tripoli.

It was on the 31st of October that the "Philadelphia" fell into the hands of the Tripolitans, but it was not until Nov. 27 that the news of the disaster reached Commodore Preble and the other officers of the squadron. Shortly after the receipt of the news, the commodore proceeded with his flag-ship, accompanied by the "Enterprise," to Tripoli, to renew the blockade which had been broken by the loss of the "Philadelphia."

It was indeed high time that some life should be infused into the war with Tripoli. Commodore Dale had been sent to the Mediterranean with instructions that tied him hand and foot. Morris, who followed him, was granted more discretion by Congress, but had not been given the proper force. Now that Preble had arrived with a sufficient fleet, warlike

instructions, and a reputation for dash unexcelled by that of any officer in the navy, the blue-jackets looked for some active service. Foreign nations were beginning to speak scornfully of the harmless antics of the United States fleet in the Mediterranean, and the younger American officers had fought more than one duel with foreigners to uphold the honor of the American service. They now looked to Preble to give them a little active service. An incident which occurred shortly after the arrival of the "Constitution" in the Bay of Gibraltar convinced the American officers that their commodore had plenty of fire and determination in his character.

One night the lookouts reported a large vessel alongside, and the hail from the "Constitution" brought only a counter-hail from the stranger. Both vessels continued to hail without any answer being returned, when Preble came on deck. Taking the trumpet from the hand of the quarter-master, he shouted, —

"I now hail you for the last time. If you do not answer, I'll fire a shot into you."

"If you fire, I'll return a broadside," was the reply.

"I'd like to see you do it. I now hail you for an answer. What ship is that?"

"This is H. B. M. ship 'Donegal,' eighty-four; Sir Richard Strachan, an English commodore. Send a boat aboard."

"This is the United States ship 'Constitution,' forty-four," answered Preble, in high dudgeon; "Edward Preble, an American commodore; and I'll be d—d if I send a boat on board of any ship. Blow your matches, boys!"

The Englishman saw a conflict coming, and sent a boat aboard with profuse apologies. She was really the frigate "Maidstone," but being in no condition for immediate battle had prolonged the hailing in order to make needed preparations.

On the 23d of December, while the "Constitution" and "Enterprise" were blockading Tripoli, the latter vessel overhauled and captured the ketch "Mastico," freighted with female slaves that were being sent by

the Bashaw of Tripoli to the Porte, as a gift. The capture in itself was unimportant, save for the use made of the ketch later.

The vessels of the blockading squadron, from their station outside the bar, could see the captured "Philadelphia" riding lightly at her moorings under the guns of the Tripolitan batteries. Her captors had carefully repaired the injuries the Americans had inflicted upon the vessel before surrendering. Her foremast was again in place, the holes in her bottom were plugged, the scars of battle were effaced, and she rode at anchor as pretty a frigate as ever delighted the eye of a tar.

From his captivity Bainbridge had written letters to Commodore Preble, with postscripts written in lemon-juice, and illegible save when the sheet of paper was exposed to the heat. In these postscripts he urged the destruction of the "Philadelphia." Lieut. Stephen Decatur, in command of the "Enterprise," eagerly seconded these proposals, and proposed to cut into the port with the "Enterprise," and undertake the destruction of the captured ship. Lieut.-Commander Stewart of the "Nautilus" made the same proposition; but Preble rejected both, not wishing to imperil a man-of-war on so hazardous an adventure.

The commodore, however, had a project of his own which he communicated to Decatur, and in which that adventurous sailor heartily joined. This plan was to convert the captured ketch into a man-of-war, man her with volunteers, and with her attempt the perilous adventure of the destruction of the "Philadelphia." The project once broached was quickly carried into effect. The ketch was taken into the service, and named the "Intrepid." News of the expedition spread throughout the squadron, and many officers eagerly volunteered their services. When the time was near at hand, Decatur called the crew of the "Enterprise" together, told them of the plan of the proposed expedition, pointed out its dangers, and called for volunteers. Every man and boy on the vessel stepped forward, and begged to be taken. Decatur chose sixty-two picked men, and was about to leave the deck, when his steps were arrested by a young boy who begged hard to be taken.

"Why do you want to go, Jack?" asked the commodore.

"Well, sir," said Jack, "you see, I'd kinder like to see the country."

The oddity of the boy's reason struck Decatur's fancy, and he told Jack to report with the rest.

On the night of Feb. 3, 1804, the "Intrepid," accompanied by the "Siren," parted company with the rest of the fleet, and made for Tripoli. The voyage was stormy and fatiguing. More than seventy men were cooped up in the little ketch, which had quarters scarcely for a score. The provisions which had been put aboard were in bad condition, so that after the second day they had only bread and water upon which to live. When they had reached the entrance to the harbor of Tripoli, they were driven back by the fury of the gale, and forced to take shelter in a neighboring cove. There they remained until the 15th, repairing damages, and completing their preparations for the attack.

The weather having moderated, the two vessels left their place of concealment, and shaped their course for Tripoli. On the way, Decatur gave his forces careful instructions as to the method of attack. The Americans were divided into several boarding parties, each with its own officer and work. One party was to keep possession of the upper deck, another was to carry the gun-deck, a third should drive the enemy from the steerage, and so on. All were to carry pistols in their belts; but the fighting, as far as possible, was to be done with cutlasses, so that no noise might alarm the enemy in the batteries, and the vessels in the port. One party was to hover near the "Philadelphia" in a light boat, and kill all Tripolitans who might try to escape to the shore by swimming. The watchword for the night was "Philadelphia."

About noon, the "Intrepid" came in sight of the towers of Tripoli. Both the ketch and the "Siren" had been so disguised that the enemy could not recognize them, and they therefore stood boldly for the harbor. As the wind was fresh, Decatur saw that he was likely to make port before night; and he therefore dragged a cable and a number of buckets astern to lessen his speed, fearing to take in sail, lest the suspicions of the enemy should be aroused.

When within about five miles of the town, the "Philadelphia" became

visible. She floated lightly at her anchorage under the guns of two heavy batteries. Behind her lay moored two Tripolitan cruisers, and near by was a fleet of gunboats. It was a powerful stronghold into which the Yankee blue-jackets were about to carry the torch.

About ten o'clock, the adventurers reached the harbor's mouth. The wind had fallen so that the ketch was wafted slowly along over an almost glassy sea. The "Siren" took up a position in the offing, while the "Intrepid," with her devoted crew, steered straight for the frigate. A new moon hung in the sky. From the city arose the soft low murmur of the night. In the fleet all was still.

On the decks of the "Intrepid" but twelve men were visible. The rest lay flat on the deck, in the shadow of the bulwarks or weather-boards. Her course was laid straight for the bow of the frigate, which she was to foul. When within a short distance, a hail came from the "Philadelphia." In response, the pilot of the ketch answered, that the ketch was a coaster from Malta, that she had lost her anchors in the late gale, and had been nearly wrecked, and that she now asked permission to ride by the frigate during the night. The people on the frigate were wholly deceived, and sent out ropes to the ketch, allowing one of the boats of the "Intrepid" to make a line fast to the frigate. The ends of the ropes on the ketch were passed to the hidden men, who pulled lustily upon them, thus bringing the little craft alongside the frigate. But, as she came into clearer view, the suspicions of the Tripolitans were aroused; and when at last the anchors of the "Intrepid" were seen hanging in their places at the cat-heads, the Tripolitans cried out that they had been deceived, and warned the strangers to keep off. At the same moment the cry, "Americanos! Americanos!" rang through the ship, and the alarm was given.

By this time the ketch was fast to the frigate. "Follow me, lads," cried Decatur, and sprang for the chain-plates of the "Philadelphia." Clinging there, he renewed his order to board; and the men sprang to their feet, and were soon clambering on board the frigate. Lieut. Morris first trod the deck of the "Philadelphia," Decatur followed close after,

and then the stream of men over the rail and through the open ports was constant. Complete as was the surprise, the entire absence of any resistance was astonishing. Few of the Turks had weapons in their hands, and those who had fled before the advancing Americans. On all sides the splashing of water told that the affrighted Turks were trying to make their escape that way. In ten minutes Decatur and his men had complete possession of the ship.

Doubtless at that moment the successful adventurers bitterly regretted that they could not take out of the harbor the noble frigate they had so nobly recaptured. But the orders of the commodore, and the dangers of their own situation, left them no choice. Nothing was to be done but to set fire to the frigate, and retreat with all possible expedition. The combustibles were brought from the ketch, and piled about the frigate, and lighted. So quickly was the work done, and so rapidly did the flames spread, that the people who lit the fires in the storerooms and cockpit had scarce time to get on deck before their retreat was cut off by the flames. Before the ketch could be cast off from the sides of the frigate, the flames came pouring out of the port-holes, and flaming sparks fell aboard the smaller vessel, so that the ammunition which lay piled amidships was in grave danger of being exploded. Axes and cutlasses were swung with a will; and soon the bonds which held the two vessels together were cut, and the ketch was pushed off. Then the blue-jackets bent to their sweeps, and soon the "Intrepid" was under good headway.

"Now, lads," cried Decatur, "give them three cheers."

And the jackies responded with ringing cheers, that mingled with the roar of the flames that now had the frame of the "Philadelphia" in their control. Then they grasped their sweeps again, and the little vessel glided away through a hail of grape and round shot from the Tripolitan batteries and men-of-war. Though the whistle of the missiles was incessant, and the splash of round-shot striking the water could be heard on every side, no one in the boat was hurt; and the only shot that touched the ketch went harmlessly through her mainsail. As they pulled away, they saw the flames catch the rigging of the "Philadelphia," and run high up the

PAGE 279.—BLUE JACKETS OF '76.

BURNING OF THE "PHILADELPHIA"

masts. Then the hatchways were burst open, and great gusts of flame leaped out. The shotted guns of the frigate were discharged in quick succession; one battery sending its iron messengers into the streets of Tripoli, while the guns on the other side bore upon Fort English. The angry glare of the flames, and the flash of the cannon, lighted up the bay; while the thunders of the cannonade, and the cries of the Tripolitans, told of the storm that was raging.

The ruddy light of the burning ship bore good news to two anxious parties of Decatur's friends. Capt. Bainbridge and the other American officers whom the Tripolitans had captured with the "Philadelphia" were imprisoned in a tower looking out upon the bay. The rapid thunder of the cannonade on this eventful night awakened them; and they rushed to their windows, to see the "Philadelphia," the Bashaw's boasted prize, in flames. Right lustily they added their cheers to the general tumult, nor ceased their demonstrations of joy until a surly guard came and ordered them from the windows.

Far out to sea another band of watchers hailed the light of the conflagration with joy. The "Siren" had gone into the offing when the "Intrepid" entered the harbor, and there awaited with intense anxiety the outcome of the adventure. After an hour's suspense, a rocket was seen to mount into the sky, and burst over Tripoli. It was the signal of success agreed upon. Boats were quickly lowered, and sent to the harbor's mouth to meet and cover the retreat of the returning party. Hardly had they left the side of the ship, when the red light in the sky told that the "Philadelphia" was burning; and an hour later Decatur himself sprang over the taffrail, and proudly announced his victory.

Not a man had been lost in the whole affair. As the expedition had been perfect in conception, so it was perfect in execution. The adventure became the talk of all Europe. Lord Nelson, England's greatest admiral, said of it, "It was the most bold and daring act of the ages." And when the news reached the United States, Decatur, despite his youth, was made a captain.

CHAPTER XVII.

A STIRRING YEAR. — THE BOMBARDMENT OF TRIPOLI. — DECATUR'S HAND-TO-HAND FIGHT. — LIEUT. TRIPPE'S BRAVERY. — LIEUT. SPENCE'S BOLD DEED. — SOMERS'S NARROW ESCAPE. — THE FLOATING MINE. — THE FATAL EXPLOSION. — CLOSE OF THE WAR. — THE END.

DECATUR'S brilliant exploit set the key-note for the year 1804; and, for the remainder of that year, the Americans carried on the war with no less spirit and dash. A high degree of daring had been infused into the men by so notable an example; and long before the year was out, the blue-jackets began to consider themselves invincible, and were ready to undertake any exploit for which their services might be required.

The lesser events of the year, we must pass over hastily. The maintenance of the blockade of Tripoli led to one or two slight actions, and an occasional capture of little consequence. Thus, in March, the "Siren" captured the "Transfer," privateer, which was trying to run the blockade. A month or two later, a coasting felucca, loaded with supplies, was chased ashore near Tripoli, and two boats' crews were sent to take possession of her. The Tripolitans, as usual, sent out a body of cavalry to protect the felucca, and the Americans were driven off. Thereupon the American blockading squadron took up a position within range, and threw solid shot into the felucca until she was a

complete wreck. Nor did the Tripolitan cavalry escape without a shot or two.

But while the smaller vessels of the Mediterranean squadron were enforcing the blockade before Tripoli, Commodore Preble, with the flag-ship and the larger vessels, was at Malta preparing for a vigorous attack upon the city of the Bashaw itself. He had added to the fleet he had brought with him from the United States two bomb-vessels and six gunboats. He had also added somewhat to the armament of the "Constitution," and now proposed to try the effect upon Tripoli of a vigorous bombardment. By the 21st of July, the commodore was able to leave Malta with his fleet, fully prepared for active hostilities.

Tripoli was then defended by heavy batteries mounting a hundred and fifteen guns. In the harbor were moored nineteen gunboats, two galleys, two schooners, and a brig. The available force under the command of the Bashaw numbered not less than twenty-five thousand men. It was no pygmy undertaking upon which the Americans had embarked.

On the 31st of August, 1804, the first attack was made; and though only a bombardment of the town had been contemplated, there followed one of the most desperate hand-to-hand naval battles recorded in history.

It was a sultry midsummer day, and the white walls of the city of Tripoli glared under the fierce rays of a tropical sun. A light breeze stirred the surface of the water, and made life on the ships bearable. Before this breeze the American squadron ran down towards the town. All preparations had been made for a spirited bombardment; and as the Americans drew near the shore, they saw that the Tripolitans had suspected the attack, and had made ready for it.

The attacking forces formed into two lines, with the regular naval vessels in the rear, and the gunboats and bomb-vessels in front. As the vessels in the van were to bear the brunt of the battle, they were manned by picked crews from the larger vessels, and had for their officers the most daring spirits of the Mediterranean squadron. At half-past two the firing commenced, and soon from every vessel in the American line shells and shot were being thrown into the city of the Bashaw. The

Tripolitan batteries returned the fire with vigor, and their gunboats pressed forward to drive the assailants back. At the approach of the Tripolitan gunboats, the Americans diverted their aim from the city, and, loading with grape and canister, turned upon their foes a murderous fire. Upon the eastern division of the enemy's gunboats, nine in number, Decatur led the four boats under his command. The advance of the enemy was checked; but still the Americans pressed on, until fairly within the smoke of the Tripolitans' guns. Here the boats were held in position by the brawny sailors at the sweeps, while the gunners poured grape and canister into the enemy. Fearfully were the Americans outnumbered. They could hope for no help from their friends in the men-of-war in the rear. They were hemmed in on all sides by hostile gunboats, more strongly manned, and heavier in metal, than they. They were outnumbered three to one; for gunboat No. 3, which had belonged to Decatur's division, had drawn out of the fight in obedience to a signal for recall, which had been displayed by mistake on the "Constitution." Then Decatur displayed his desperate courage. Signalling to his companions to close with their adversaries and board, he laid his vessel alongside the nearest gunboat; and in a trice every American of the crew was swarming over the enemy's bulwarks. Taken by surprise, the Turks retreated. The gunboat was divided down the centre by a long, narrow hatchway; and as the Yankees came tumbling over the bulwarks, the Turks retreated to the farther side. This gave Decatur time to rally his men; and, dividing them into two parties, he sent one party around by the stern of the boat, while he led a party around the bow. The Turks were dazed by the suddenness of the attack, and cowed by the fearful effect of the Americans' last volley before boarding. Their captain lay dead, with fourteen bullets in his body. Many of the officers were wounded, and all the survivors were penned into a narrow space by the two parties of blue-jackets. The contest was short. Hampered by lack of room in which to wield their weapons, the Turks were shot down or bayoneted. Many leaped over the gunwale into the sea; many were thrown into the open hatchway; and the remnant, throwing down their arms, pleaded piteously for quarter.

Decatur had no time to exult in his victory. Hastily securing his prisoners below decks, and making his prize fast to his own vessel, he bore down upon the Tripolitan next to leeward.

While shaping his course for this vessel, Decatur was arrested by a hail from the gunboat which had been commanded by his brother James. He was told that his brother had gallantly engaged and captured a Tripolitan gunboat, but that, on going aboard of her after her flag had been struck, he had been shot down by the cowardly Turk who was in command. The murderer then rallied his men, drove the Americans away, and carried his craft out of the battle.

Decatur's grief for the death of his brother gave way, for the time, to his anger on account of the base treachery by which the victim met his death. Casting prudence to the winds, he turned his boat's prow towards the gunboat of the murderer, and, urging on his rowers, soon laid the enemy aboard. Cutlass in hand, Decatur was first on the deck of the enemy. Behind him followed close Lieut. Macdonough and nine blue-jackets. Nearly forty Turks were ready to receive the boarders. As the boarders came over the rail, they fired their pistols at the enemy, and then sprang down, cutlass in hand. The Turks outnumbered them five to one; but the Americans rallied in a bunch, and dealt lusty blows right and left. At last, Decatur singled out a man whom he felt sure was the commander, and the murderer of his brother. He was a man of gigantic frame; his head covered with a scarlet cap, his face half hidden by a bristly black beard. He was armed with a heavy boarding-pike, with which he made a fierce lunge at Decatur. The American parried the blow, and make a stroke at the pike, hoping to cut off its point. But the force of the blow injured the Tripolitan's weapon not a whit, while Decatur's cutlass broke short off at the hilt. With a yell of triumph the Turk lunged again. Decatur threw up his arm, and partially avoided the thrust; so that the pike pierced his breast, but inflicted only a slight wound. Grappling the weapon, Decatur tore it from the wound, wrested it from the Turk, and made a lunge at him, which he avoided. The combatants then clinched and fell to the deck, fiercely struggling for life and death. About them fought

their followers, who strove to aid their respective commanders. Suddenly a Tripolitan officer, who had fought his way to a place above the heads of the two officers, aimed a blow at the head of Decatur. His victim was powerless to guard himself. One American sailor only was at hand. This was Reuben James, a young man whose desperate fighting had already cost him wounds in both arms, so that he could not lift a hand to save his commander. But, though thus desperately wounded, James had yet one offering to lay before his captain, — his life. And he showed himself willing to make this last and greatest sacrifice, by thrusting his head into the path of the descending scimetar, and taking upon his own skull the blow intended for Decatur. The hero fell bleeding to the deck; a pistol-shot from an American ended the career of the Turk, and Decatur was left to struggle with his adversary upon the deck.

But by this time the great strength of the Turkish captain was beginning to tell in the death-struggle. His right arm was clasped like an iron band around the American captain, while with his left hand he drew from his belt a short *yataghan*, which he was about to plunge into the throat of his foe. Decatur lay on his side, with his eyes fixed upon the face of his foe. He saw the look of triumph flash in the eyes of the Turk; he saw the gleaming steel of the *yataghan* as it was drawn from its sheath. Mustering all his strength, he writhed in the grasp of his burly foe. He wrested his left arm clear, and caught the Turk's wrist just as the fatal blow was falling; then with his right hand he drew fron his pocket a small pistol. Pressing this tightly against the back of his enemy, he fired. The ball passed through the body of the Turk, and lodged in Decatur's clothing. A moment later the Tripolitan's hold relaxed, and he fell back dead; while Decatur, covered with his own blood and that of his foe, rose to his feet, and stood amidst the pile of dead and wounded men that had gathered during the struggle around the battling chiefs.

The fall of their captain disheartened the Tripolitans, and they speedily threw down their arms. The prize was then towed out of the line of battle; and, as by this time the American gunboats were drawing off, Decatur took his prizes into the shelter of the flag-ship.

While Decatur had been thus engaged, the gunboats under his command had not been idle. Lieut. Trippe, in command of No. 6, had fought a hand-to-hand battle that equalled that of Decatur. Trippe's plan of attack had been the same as that of his leader. Dashing at the enemy, he had let fly a round of grape and canister, then boarded in the smoke and confusion. But his boat struck that of the enemy with such force as to recoil; and Trippe, who had sprung into the enemy's rigging, found himself left with but nine of his people, to confront nearly two-score Tripolitans. The Americans formed in a solid phalanx, and held their ground bravely. Again the two commanders singled each other out, and a fierce combat ensued. The Turk was armed with a cutlass, while Trippe fought with a short boarding-pike. They fought with caution, sparring and fencing, until each had received several slight wounds. At last the Tripolitan struck Trippe a crushing blow on the head. The American fell, half stunned, upon his knees; and at this moment a second Tripolitan aimed a blow at him from behind, but was checked and killed by an American marine. Rallying all his strength, Trippe made a fierce thrust at his adversary. This time the sharp pike found its mark, and passed through the body of the Tripolitan captain, who fell to the deck. His men, seeing him fall, abandoned the contest, and the Americans were soon bearing away their prize in triumph. But in the excitement of victory no one thought to haul down the Tripolitan flag, which still flaunted defiant at the end of the long lateen mast. So, when the prize came near the "Vixen," the American man-of-war, mistaking her for an enemy, let fly a broadside, that brought down flag, mast and all. Luckily no one was hurt, and the broadside was not repeated.

But by this time the wind had veered round into an unfavorable quarter, and the flag-ship showed a signal for the discontinuance of the action. The gunboats and their prizes were taken in tow by the schooners and brigs, and towed out of range of the enemy's shot. While this operation was going on, the "Constitution" kept up a rapid fire upon the shore batteries, and not until the last of the smaller craft

was out of range, did she turn to leave the fray. As she came about, a shot came in one of her stern-ports, struck a gun near which Commodore Preble was standing, broke to pieces, and scattered death and wounds about.

When the squadron had made an offing, Preble hoisted a signal for the commanders to come aboard the flag-ship, and make their reports. He was sorely disappointed in the outcome of the fray, and little inclined to recognize the conspicuous instances of individual gallantry shown by his officers. He had set his heart upon capturing the entire fleet of nine Tripolitan gunboats, and the escape of six of them had roused his naturally irascible disposition to fury. As he stalked his quarter-deck, morose and silent, Decatur came aboard. The young officer still wore the bloody, smoke-begrimed uniform in which he had grappled with the Turk, his face was begrimed with powder, his hands and breast covered with blood. As he walked to the quarter-deck, he was the centre of observation of all on the flagship. Stepping up to the commodore, he said quietly, —

"Well, commodore, I have brought you out three of the gunboats."

Preble turned upon him fiercely, seized him with both hands by the collar, and shaking him like a schoolboy, snarled out, —

"Ay, sir, why did you not bring me more?"

The blood rushed to Decatur's face. The insult was more than he could bear. His hand sought his dagger, but the commodore had left the quarter-deck. Turning on his heel, the outraged officer walked to the side, and called his boat, determined to leave the ship at once. But the officers crowded about him, begging him to be calm, and reminding him of the notoriously quick temper of the commodore. While they talked, there came a cabin steward with a message. "The commodore wishes to see Capt. Decatur below." Decatur hesitated a moment, then obeyed. Some time passed, but he did not re-appear on deck. The officers became anxious, and at last, upon some pretext, one sought the commodore's cabin. There he found Preble and Decatur, sitting together, friendly, but both silent, and in tears. The apology had been made and accepted.

There is one humble actor in the first attack upon Tripoli, whom we cannot abandon without a word. This is Reuben James. That heroic young sailor quickly recovered from the bad wound he received when he interposed his own head to save his commander's life. One day Decatur called him aft, and publicly asked him what could be done to reward him for his unselfish heroism. The sailor was embarrassed and nonplussed. He rolled his quid of tobacco in his mouth, and scratched his head, without replying. His shipmates were eager with advice. "Double pay, Jack: the old man will refuse you nothing;" "a boatswain's berth;" "a pocket-full of money and shore leave," were among the suggestions. But James put them aside. He had decided.

"If you please, sir," said he, "let somebody else hand out the hammocks to the men when they are piped down. That is a sort of business that I don't exactly like."

The boon was granted; and ever afterwards, when the crew was piped to stow away hammocks, Reuben James sauntered about the decks with his hands in his pockets, the very personification of elegant leisure.

For modesty, the request of the preserver of Decatur is only equalled by that of the sailor who decided the battle between the "Bonne Homme Richard" and the "Serapis." He had stationed himself on the yard-arm, and was dropping hand-grenades upon the deck of the "Serapis." At last a well-aimed grenade set fire to some powder on the enemy's ship, and virtually decided the day in favor of the Americans. When asked by Paul Jones what he would have as a reward for this great service, he suggested double rations of grog for the next week as the proper recompense. This he got, and no more.

But to return to the American fleet before Tripoli. Four days were spent in repairing damages, and on the 7th of August a second attack was made upon the town. The disposition of the American forces was much the same as on the occasion of the first attack, although the Americans were re-enforced by the three captured gunboats. The fighting was confined to long-range cannonading; for the enemy had been taught a lesson, and was afraid to try conclusions hand to hand with the

Americans. About three o'clock in the afternoon, a tremendous explosion drew the gaze of every one to the spot where gunboat No. 8 had been anchored. At first only a dense mass of smoke, with the water surrounding it littered with wreckage, was to be seen. When the smoke cleared away, the extent of the disaster was evident. The gunboat had blown up. Her bow alone remained above water, and there a handful of plucky men were loading the great twenty-six-pound cannon that formed her armament. Lieut. Spence commanded the gunners, and urged them on.

"Now, lads, be lively," he cried. "Let's get one shot at the Turks before we sink."

Every ship in the squadron was cheering the devoted crew of No. 8. From every vessel anxious eyes watched the men who thus risked their lives for one shot. The water was rushing into the shattered hulk; and just as Spence pulled the lanyard, and sent a cast-iron shot into Tripoli, the wreck gave a lurch, and went down. Her crew was left struggling in the water. Spence, who could not swim, saved himself by clinging to an oar, while his men struck out for the nearer vessels, and were soon receiving the congratulations of their comrades.

In this attack, Richard Somers, a most courageous and capable officer, who a few weeks later met a tragic end, narrowly escaped death. He was in command of gunboat No. 1, and while directing the attack stood leaning against her flagstaff. He saw a shot flying in his direction. Involuntarily he ducked his head, and the next instant the flying shot cut away the flagstaff just above him. When the action was over, Lieut. Somers stood by the pole, and found that the shot had cut it at the exact height of his chin.

After firing for about three hours, the American squadron drew off. Little had been accomplished, for the stone walls and fortresses of Tripoli were not to be damaged very greatly by marine artillery. The Americans themselves had suffered seriously. Their killed and wounded amounted to eighteen men. They had lost one gunboat by an explosion, and all the vessels had suffered somewhat from the Tripolitan fire.

That night the Americans were gladdened by the arrival of the frigate

"John Adams," bringing letters and news from home. She brought also the information that re-enforcements were coming. Accordingly Preble determined to defer any further attack upon Tripoli until the arrival of the expected vessels. In the mean time he had several interviews with the Bashaw upon the subject of peace; but, as the Turk would not relinquish his claim of five hundred dollars ransom for each captive in his hands, no settlement was reached.

While waiting for the re-enforcements, Preble continued his preparations for another attack. The ships were put into fighting trim, munition hauled over, and repeated and thorough reconnoissances of the enemy's works made. It was while on the latter duty, that the brig "Argus" narrowly escaped destruction. With Preble on board, she stood into the harbor, and was just coming about before one of the batteries, when a heavy shot raked her bottom, cutting several planks half through. Had the shot been an inch higher, it would have sunk the brig.

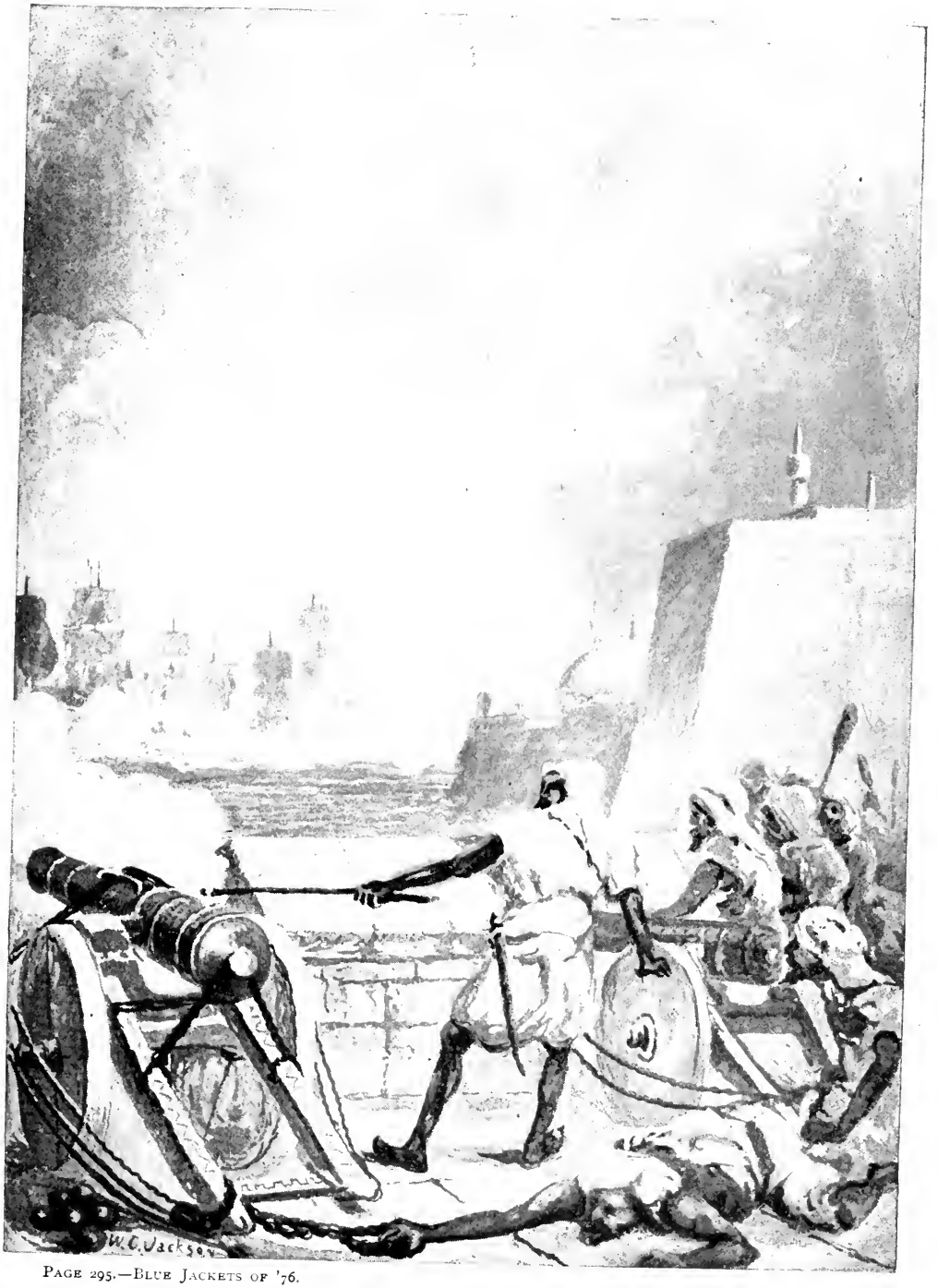
By the 24th of August, Preble's patience was exhausted; and, without waiting longer for the expected squadron, he began an attack upon the town. On the night of the 24th, a few shells were thrown into Tripoli, but did little damage. Four days later, a more determined attack was made, in which every vessel in the squadron took part. Two of the enemy's gunboats were sunk; but with this exception little material damage was done, though the Americans chose the most advantageous positions, and fired fast and well. It was becoming evident that men-of-war were no match for stone walls.

During this engagement, the American fleet came within range of the Bashaw's palace, and the flying shot and shell drove that dignitary and his suite to a bomb-proof dungeon. One heavy shot flew in at the window of the cell in which Capt. Bainbridge was confined, and striking the wall, brought down stones and mortar upon him as he lay in bed, so that he was seriously bruised. But the American captain was in no way daunted, and the next day wrote in sympathetic ink to Preble, telling him to keep up his fire, for the Tripolitans were greatly harassed by it.

On Sept. 3, yet another attack upon the town and fortress was made. As in the foregoing instances, nothing was accomplished except the throwing of a vast quantity of shot and shell. Capt. Bainbridge, in a secret letter to Preble, reported, that of the shells he had seen falling in the city very few exploded, and the damage done by them was therefore very light. Preble investigated the matter, and found that the fuse-holes of many of the shells had been stopped with lead, so that no fire could enter. The shells had been bought in Sicily, where they had been made to resist a threatened invasion by the French. It is supposed that they had been thus ruined by French secret agents.

But, before this time, Commodore Preble, and the officers under his command, had about reached the conclusion that Tripoli could not be reduced by bombardment. Accordingly they cast about for some new method of attack. The plan that was finally adopted proved unfortunate in this instance, just as similar schemes for the reduction of fortresses have prove futile throughout all history. Briefly stated, the plan was to send a fire-ship, or rather a floating mine, into the harbor, to explode before the walls of the fortress, and in the midst of the enemy's cruisers.

The ketch "Intrepid," which had carried Decatur and his daring followers out of the harbor of Tripoli, leaving the "Philadelphia" burning behind them, was still with the fleet. This vessel was chosen, and with all possible speed was converted into an "infernal," or floating mine. "A small room, or magazine, had been planked up in the hold of the ketch, just forward of her principal mast," writes Fenimore Cooper. "Communicating with this magazine was a trunk, or tube, that led aft to another room filled with combustibles. In the planked room, or magazine, were placed one hundred barrels of gunpowder in bulk; and on the deck, immediately above the powder, were laid fifty thirteen-and-a-half-inch shells, and one hundred nine-inch shells, with a large quantity of shot, pieces of kentledge, and fragments of iron of different sorts. A train was laid in the trunk, or tube, and fuses were attached in the proper manner. In addition to this arrangement, the other small room mentioned was filled with splinters and light wood, which, besides firing the train, were to keep the enemy from



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BOMBARDMENT OF TRIPOLI.

boarding, as the flames would be apt to induce them to apprehend an immediate explosion."

Such was the engine of death prepared. The plan of operations was simply to put a picked crew on this floating volcano, choose a dark night, take the "infernal" into the heart of the enemy's squadron, fire it, and let the crew escape in boats as best they might.

The leadership of this desperate enterprise was intrusted to Lieut. Richard Somers. Indeed, it is probable that the idea itself originated with him, for a commanding officer would be little likely to assign a subordinate a duty so hazardous. Moreover, there existed between Decatur and Somers a generous rivalry. Each strove to surpass the other; and since Decatur's exploit with the "Philadelphia," Somers had been seeking an opportunity to win equal distinction. It is generally believed, that, having conceived the idea of the "infernal," he suggested it to Preble, and claimed for himself the right of leadership.

But ten men and one officer were to accompany Mr. Somers on his perilous trip. Yet volunteers were numerous, and only by the most inflexible decision could the importunate ones be kept back. The officer chosen was Lieut. Wadsworth of the "Constitution," and the men were chosen from that ship and from the "Nautilus."

As the time for carrying out the desperate enterprise drew near, Preble pointed out to the young commander the great danger of the affair, and the responsibility that rested upon him. Particularly was he enjoined not to permit the powder in the ketch to fall into the hands of the Tripolitans, who at that time were short of ammunition. One day, while talking with Somers, Preble burned a port-fire, or slow-match, and, noting its time, asked Somers if he thought the boats could get out of reach of the shells in the few minutes it was burning.

"I think we can, sir," was the quiet response.

Something in the speaker's tone aroused Preble's interest, and he said, —

"Would you like the port-fire shorter still?"

"I ask no port-fire at all," was the quiet reply.

At last the day of the adventure was at hand. It was Sept. 4, the day following the last attack upon Tripoli. The sky was overcast and lowering, and gave promise of a dark night. Fully convinced that the time for action was at hand, Somers called together the handful of brave fellows who were to follow him, and briefly addressed them. He told them he wished no man to go with him who did not prefer being blown up to being captured. For his part, he would much prefer such a fate, and he wished his followers to agree with him. For answer the brave fellows gave three cheers, and crowded round him, each asking to be selected to apply the match. Somers then passed among the officers and crew of the "Nautilus," shaking hands, and bidding each farewell. There were few dry eyes in the ship that afternoon; for all loved their young commander, and all knew how desperate was the enterprise in which he had embarked.

It was after dusk when the devoted adventurers boarded the powder-laden ketch, as she lay tossing at her anchorage. Shortly after they had taken possession, a boat came alongside with Decatur and Lieut. Stewart in the stern-sheets. The officers greeted their comrades with some emotion. They were all about of an age, followed one loved profession, and each had given proofs of his daring. When the time came for them to part, the leave-taking was serious, but tranquil. Somers took from his finger a ring, and breaking it into four pieces, gave one to each of his friends. Then with hearty handshakings, and good wishes for success, Decatur and Stewart left their friends.

On the ketch was one man who had not been accepted as a volunteer. This was Lieut. Israel of the "Constitution," who had smuggled himself aboard. With this addition to his original force, Somers ordered sail made, and the "Intrepid" turned her prow in the direction of the Tripolitan batteries.

As far as the harbor's mouth, she was accompanied by the "Argus," the "Vixen," and the "Nautilus." There they left her, and she pursued her way alone. It was a calm, foggy night. A few stars could be seen glimmering through the haze, and a light breeze ruffled the water, and

wafted the sloop gently along her course. From the three vessels that waited outside the harbor's mouth, eager watchers with night-glasses kept their gaze riveted upon the spectral form of the ketch, as she slowly receded from their sight. Fainter and fainter grew the outline of her sails, until at last they were lost to sight altogether. Then fitful flashes from the enemy's batteries, and the harsh thunder of the cannon, told that she had been sighted by the foe. The anxious watchers paced their decks with bated breath. Though no enemy was near to hear them, they spoke in whispers. The shadow of a great awe, the weight of some great calamity, seemed crushing them.

"What was that?"

All started at the abrupt exclamation. Through the haze a glimmering light had been seen to move rapidly along the surface of the water, as though a lantern were being carried along a deck. Suddenly it disappeared, as though dropped down a hatchway. A few seconds passed, — seconds that seemed like hours. Then there shot up into the sky a dazzling jet of fire. A roar like that of a huge volcano shook earth and sea. The vessels trembled at their moorings. The concussion of the air threw men upon the decks. Then the mast of the ketch, with its sail blazing, was seen to rise straight into the air, and fall back. Bombs with burning fuses flew in every direction. The distant sound of heavy bodies falling into the water and on the rocks was heard. Then all was still. Even the Tripolitan batteries were silent.

For a moment a great sorrow fell upon the Americans. Then came the thought that Somers and his brave men might have left the ketch before the explosion. All listened for approaching oars. Minutes lengthened into hours, and still no sound was heard. Men hung from the sides of the vessels, with their ears to the water, in the hopes of catching the sound of the coming boats. But all was in vain. Day broke; the shattered wreck of the "Intrepid" could be seen within the harbor, and near it two injured Tripolitan gunboats. But of Somers and his brave followers no trace could be seen, nor were they ever again beheld by their companions.

To Capt. Bainbridge in his prison-cell came a Tripolitan officer, several days later, asking him to go to a point of rocks, and view some bodies thrown there by the waves. Thither Bainbridge went, and was shown several bodies shockingly mutilated and burned. Though they were doubtless the remains of some of the gallant adventurers, they could not be identified.

The exact reason for this disaster can never be known. Many have thought that Somers saw capture inevitable, and with his own hand fired the fatal charge; others believed the explosion to be purely accidental; while the last and most plausible theory is, that a shot from the enemy's batteries penetrated the magazine, and ended the career of the "Intrepid" and her gallant crew. But however vexed the controversy over the cause of the explosion, there has been no denial of the gallantry of its victims. The names of all are honored in naval annals, while that of Somers became a battle-cry, and has been borne by some of the most dashing vessels of the United States navy.

It may be said that this episode terminated the war with Tripoli. Thereafter it was but a series of blockades and diplomatic negotiations. Commodore Barron relieved Preble, and maintained the blockade, without any offensive operations, until peace was signed in June, 1805. The conditions of that peace cannot be too harshly criticised. By it the United States paid sixty thousand dollars for American prisoners in the hands of the Bashaw, thus yielding to demands for ransom which no civilized nation should for a moment have considered. The concession was all the more unnecessary, because a native force of insurrectionists, re-enforced by a few Americans, was marching upon Tripoli from the rear, and would have soon brought the Bashaw to terms. But it was not the part of the navy to negotiate the treaty. That rested with the civilians. The duty of the blue-jackets had been to fight for their country's honor; and that they had discharged this duty well, no reader of these pages can deny.

We have now finished our story of the early days of the United States navy. Of its later exploits in 1812 and 1861, we have spoken in other

volumes. Of the work it did while a young and struggling organization, the readers of this book can judge. Of its later work, it is enough to say that it in every way fulfilled the promise of its youth. Paul Jones and Decatur gave way to Lawrence, Hull, David Porter, sen., and Perry. They in their turn yielded the field to Farragut and David Porter the younger. And can any doubt exist in the mind of one understanding the American character, that, should the need arise, other successors to these great commanders will appear? Our future great seamen are to-day unknown. America looks to her youth to supply them.

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